

William Withering (1741-1792), botanist and country doctor, whose accurate description of the action and uses of digitalis published in 1785 remains one of medicine's outstanding contributions.

MANAGEMENT OF THE CARDIAC PATIENT

BY

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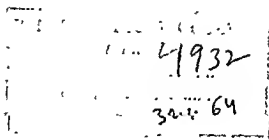
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TO
ROBERT G. TORREY, M.D.
Professor of Medicine,
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*"Medicine is not the art of
curing diseases, it is the art
of treating them with the
aim of relieving or soothing
or contenting the patient."*

CORVISART
1806.

FOREWORD

The rapid strides in *electrocardiography*, *roentgenology*, and *blood chemistry* in the diagnosis, treatment, and prognosis of heart disease, have complicated the picture tremendously from the general practitioner's standpoint. Unless he is able to sacrifice a number of months for special study in the larger medical centers, it is almost impossible for him to follow the speakers at the various medical meetings or to understand the more recent articles on the subject of cardiovascular disease.

The author of this book has hit upon a happy solution of this problem. By outlining the diagnosis and treatment of such a large number of cases, he offers to the general practitioner an example of practically every cardiovascular problem which he may meet in his practice. From this standpoint, I believe no more valuable book has appeared.

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PREFACE

Many advances are evident in all fields of modern medicine. The vast increase in knowledge in the different branches of clinical science has produced new specialties, some of which have already reached maturity, and others are in the process of development. The patient should no longer hope that one man can retain sufficient understanding of all branches to be a competent family adviser. On the other hand, the large gaps that are forming between the physician specializing in various fields and the man in general practice will ultimately react to the detriment of the patient. For example, the specialist or research worker, who is usually closely associated with a medical school, becomes so engrossed in the study of physiologic and pathologic phenomena, as well as in the newer methods of diagnosis, that he frequently overlooks treatment. The general practitioner, however, becomes so busily engaged in treatment that he has little time to take note of the progress made in the other branches of clinical medicine. After all, the family doctor is human, and though many other things in the modern world have changed, a 24-hour day is still standard for him. If, in a burst of energy, he decides to "review heart," he discovers to his dismay a voluminous literature on the subject. New terms, new concepts, even new operative procedures designed for the cardiac patient, greet him on every side. He becomes discouraged when he finds that the principles guiding management are often buried beneath an avalanche of scientific data or are presented in too meager a fashion to serve as an adequate guide to him at the bedside. So it is small wonder that his wanderings in unfamiliar territory soon cease.

This small volume attempts to assemble the facts that are most essential in the management of the cardiac patient. Physical and laboratory methods of examination that aid in the diagnosis are described and evaluated. Emphasis is placed on the present-day recognition of the importance of classifying and treating heart disease according to its etiology and the functional capacity of the patient rather than in the light of the structural defect. Material for this book has been collected during the past ten years which have been devoted to the teaching and practice of cardiology. These ten years followed seven years in general work. I have, therefore, had little difficulty in arranging the contents to fit the present-day needs of the general practitioner.

In choosing the case method of presenting this subject, I have tried to show the variations that occur in the different types of heart disease that are commonly met in office and clinic; as a result, most of the situations which appear in cardiologic practice are covered. For representative cases I have drawn heavily on material presented at Saturday clinics for the third year classes at the Woman's Medical College and to the fourth year

classes of the same institution, during ward walks at the Philadelphia General Hospital. I have also included some records of patients from the cardiac clinics of the Woman's College, Northeastern, and Memorial Hospitals in Philadelphia. I have selected from my own office files most of the cases in which home treatment is described. Only essential and pertinent data necessary to visualize the clinical picture are presented in these case summaries.

The general practitioner is still responsible for the care of the majority of cardiac cases in our country today; consequently, the methods most useful in home treatment are presented in detail. If it appears that small items in the care of the cardiac patient are overemphasized, I offer no apology, for I have learned, from a close study of a number of records, that most mistakes are apt to occur at these points. For this reason illustrations have been inserted whenever possible to show not only the essential equipment but also the technic for various diagnostic and therapeutic procedures. It is hoped that the frequent inclusion of orthodiagrams, roentgenograms, and electrocardiograms will permit the reader who is unfamiliar with the value of these methods in diagnosis to review them with the case record. A knowledge of the gross pathologic changes that take place in the cardiac structure in each of the various types of heart disease is valuable in understanding the physical signs and in planning a regime of treatment. Consequently whenever a necropsy was performed on the patient under discussion, the photographs have been included. In some instances, no doubt, my opinion as to the proper method of treatment of these cases will differ from the views held by others. If so, I hope that the beliefs set down here will not be allowed to stand unchallenged.

The electrocardiographic method is here to stay. It has proved its usefulness at the bedside and is an essential part of the equipment of every hospital and of many practitioners. A knowledge of the fundamentals of the subject can no longer be disregarded by the progressive physician. The growing interest of the general public in the subject of heart disease and the decreasing cost of the apparatus essential to the practice of cardiology have placed this new diagnostic equipment in an increasing number of Main Street offices from coast to coast. However, the usefulness of the electrocardiograph to the physician does not begin the day it arrives from the manufacturer. To understand its place in the management of the cardiac patient, the physician should study the instrument and become acquainted with its advantages as well as its limitations. If ownership is acquired, so also is the obligation to learn at least the fundamentals of electrocardiography. Without preliminary experience in taking and interpreting the electrocardiogram, the equipment alone will add little to the diagnostic skill of the physician. Furthermore, in untrained and careless hands, the electrocardiograph may actually be dangerous if unscientific and unwarranted diagnoses are turned out.

With this in mind, an attempt has been made to write a description of electrocardiography for the beginner, in the simplest terms possible. Controversial aspects have been avoided, and only the facts essential in the

interpretation of the graphs are presented, briefly and in logical sequence. Numerous electrocardiograms have also been included with the case records to aid the physician in assessing the value of the method in each instance. Little difficulty should be encountered, particularly in the understanding of the cardiac arrhythmias, if from the start we train ourselves "to think electrocardiographically." As a richer experience is gained in the laboratory of every-day practice, the electrocardiograph will then be seen to be an absolute necessity in fewer instances.

I have been slow to adopt some of the recent surgical methods that have been advanced for the treatment of various types of cardiovascular disease. In particular, attempts on the part of surgeons to influence the course of essential hypertension I have been guilty at one time or another of labelling as risky, empirical, and useless. As the years have passed, however, I have seen patients with beginning malignant hypertension, who seemed doomed under my care to a rapid, hopeless, downhill course, aided by operation to an extent that I cannot in fairness overlook if I am to present here an unbiased view of modern methods of therapy. Therefore, when surgical treatment is described in the following pages, I have stepped aside and invited my surgical colleagues to continue the discussion and present their cases. The reader must realize that these newer procedures that attack the glands of internal secretion and the nerves of the vasomotor system are far from being accepted methods in all instances. I must admit that our surgeons to date have a far better record in bringing a large measure of relief to selected cases of malignant hypertension than I can claim. This fact has been too clearly evident to me as I have reviewed a number of case histories.

Success in the treatment of heart disease in our hospital out-patient clinics is incomplete without a good social service department. What is contributed by these workers often spells the difference between a discouraged misfit in the business world and a well-adjusted patient living within the limits of his myocardial reserve. No treatise on the management of the cardiac patient would be adequate without a description of the aims and methods of the social worker. I am fortunate in being able to include a special chapter on this aspect of the treatment of heart disease written by Miss Helen Heikes, secretary of the Philadelphia Heart Association, assisted by Miss Olga Tattersfield of the Social Service Department of the Woman's College Hospital.

The arrangement of this material with the thought of publication in mind, was first discussed with Dr. William D. Stroud and Dr. Robert L. Levy in October, 1938, at the time of the 88th Annual Session of the Medical Society of the State of Pennsylvania. If the delay had not been so great in an overcrowded Scranton restaurant during one lunch hour, I would never have had the advantage of such good counsel, and this volume would not have reached the publisher in its present form—if, indeed, it would have reached him at all.

The help rendered by my colleagues on the Faculty of the Woman's Medical College is evident as their names appear in the discussion of the

treatment of the different types of heart disease. The description of the operative procedures used in hypertension, suppurative pericarditis, aneurysm and effort syndrome have been written by Dr. James Lehman. Dr. Charles Steiner has furnished the description of the injection treatment of angina, and Dr. Henry D. Jump has contributed from his experience in the wiring of aneurysms.

Allergic factors of importance in the management of heart disease have been fully covered in a chapter by Dr. Richard Kern, Professor of Clinical Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania. Dr. I. S. Ravdin, Professor of Research Surgery at the same institution, has contributed a surgeon's impression of the relationship between gallbladder disease and the heart.

The orthodiagrams, the electrocardiograms, and the charts, unless otherwise indicated, are the work of my secretary and technician, Miss Eleanor Lowe. I am also indebted to her for typing the manuscript and assisting in the proofreading. The roentgenograms are largely from the laboratory of Dr. Jacob Vastine, Clinical Professor of Roentgenology at the Woman's Medical College.

It is a pleasure to express my appreciation to Mr. Howard Gosner, photographer to the Laboratories of the Philadelphia General Hospital, for his excellent photographs of autopsy specimens. The drawings in the text have been furnished by Miss Elizabeth Minter and the frontispiece by Mr. Maulsby Kimball, Jr. My obligations to them are obvious.

Repetition has been avoided as much as possible to keep the size of the book within the limits of usefulness. For this reason, the reader must be asked to excuse the frequent references to other sections of the text, if these become annoying at times.

The pages that follow do not comprise a complete treatise on cardiology. Much material of an experimental and controversial nature has been omitted, for it is not my purpose to act as reviewer of a parade of cardiology fact and theory. Neither do I desire to claim originality for all the opinions expressed. For this reason, a selective bibliography has been added to aid the physician in the further pursuit of a topic of special interest. This list may be of some advantage since packet systems established by state and national societies bring the recent literature to the front door of any physician in the country at short notice.

Finally, it is hoped that the man in the field, far removed from our modern medical centers, who sees heart disease in its incipency as well as in its hopeless terminal stages, may find this volume a guide to a more intensive study. Then, instead of merely reading about the "increasing incidence of circulatory disease in our country today" in books, newspapers, and medical journals, he may unite with us in an attempt to answer the question, "What can be done about it?"

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
FOREWORD.....	vii
PREFACE.....	ix
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	xiii
 CHAPTER	
1. APPROACH TO THERAPY.....	1
INTRODUCTION	1
HISTORY.....	2
CARDIAC SYMPTOMS	4
EXAMINATION OF THE PATIENT	6
INSPECTION.....	9
PALPATION	11
PERCUSSION	11
AUSCULTATION	12
HEART SOUNDS AND MURMURS ..	13
ROENTGEN METHODS IN DIAGNOSIS ..	25
CARDIAC SIZE..	33
CHARACTERISTIC ORTHODIAGRAPHIC CHANGES ..	35
ELECTROCARDIOGRAPHY ..	47
SPHYGMOMANOMETRY.....	51
VENOUS PRESSURE	54
ADDITIONAL LABORATORY AIDS IN DIAGNOSIS ..	56
NOMENCLATURE OF THE AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION.....	59
FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION	63
THERAPEUTIC CLASSIFICATION	65
ILLUSTRATIVE CASES..	66
 2. HEART FAILURE	 68
TYPES.....	68
CLASSIFICATION	70
TREATMENT OF CONGESTIVE FAILURE ..	74
GENERAL MEASURES	74
DIGITALIS	76
DIURETIC DRUGS ..	87
XANTHINES	87
INORGANIC SALTS	87
ORGANIC MERCURIAL DIURETICS	88
MECHANICAL THERAPEUTIC MEASURES	92
VENESECTION	92
THORACENTESIS	93
ABDOMINAL PARACENTESIS ..	95
SOUTHEY'S TUBES	98
OXYGEN THERAPY	98
INDICATIONS	98
METHODS OF ADMINISTRATION ..	100
TOTAL THYROIDECTOMY	102
FOLLOW-UP TREATMENT	103
ILLUSTRATIVE CASES.....	105
 3. THE PROBLEM OF RHEUMATIC HEART DISEASE.....	 117
ETIOLOGY	118
THE LESION	119
PATHOLOGY	121
SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS.....	122
PROGNOSIS	128
TREATMENT.....	129
GENERAL MEASURES..	130

CHAPTER	PAGE
MANAGEMENT OF ARTHRITIS	133
MANAGEMENT OF CHOREA	134
OTHER FORMS OF THERAPY	134
PREVENTIVE MEASURES	136
ILLUSTRATIVE CASES	136
4. PERICARDITIS	162
ACUTE PERICARDITIS	162
ETIOLOGY	162
PATHOLOGY	162
SYMPTOMS	163
SIGNS	164
PARACENTESIS OF PERICARDIAL SAC	164
SURGICAL DRAINAGE	171
ILLUSTRATIVE CASE	171
TUBERCULOUS PERICARDITIS	175
ILLUSTRATIVE CASE	175
CHRONIC PERICARDITIS	179
SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS	179
CHRONIC TAMPONADE	180
ILLUSTRATIVE CASE	182
5. ACUTE AND SUBACUTE BACTERIAL ENDOCARDITIS	185
ACUTE BACTERIAL ENDOCARDITIS	185
ETIOLOGY	185
PATHOLOGY	185
SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS	186
PROGNOSIS	187
ILLUSTRATIVE CASE	187
SUBACUTE BACTERIAL ENDOCARDITIS	189
ETIOLOGY	189
PATHOLOGY	190
SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS	190
PROGNOSIS	191
MANAGEMENT	192
ILLUSTRATIVE CASES	192
6. SYPHILITIC CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE	209
THE LESION	209
SIGNS	212
SYMPTOMS	213
PROBLEM OF EARLY DIAGNOSIS	214
TREATMENT	214
ILLUSTRATIVE CASES	220
7. ANGINA PECTORIS	241
INCIDENCE	243
ETIOLOGY	243
DIAGNOSIS	244
PROGNOSIS	245
TREATMENT	245
ILLUSTRATIVE CASES	249
8. CORONARY ARTERY DISEASE INCLUDING THROM- BOSIS	259
ETIOLOGY	260
INCIDENCE	262
ANATOMY AND PATHOLOGY	262
DIAGNOSIS	263
PROGNOSIS	263
TREATMENT	269
ILLUSTRATIVE CASES	276

CHAPTER	PAGE
MANAGEMENT OF CARDIAC COMPLICATIONS OF DIABETES MELLITUS.....	287
ILLUSTRATIVE CASE.....	290
9. HYPERTENSIVE CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE.....	292
ETIOLOGY.....	293
CLASSIFICATION.....	294
MALIGNANT HYPERTENSION.....	296
INCIDENCE.....	297
SIGNS.....	299
SYMPTOMS.....	300
DIAGNOSIS.....	303
PROGNOSIS.....	305
TREATMENT.....	305
MEDICAL.....	306
SURGICAL.....	310
ILLUSTRATIVE CASES.....	314
DISSECTING ANEURYSM OF THE AORTA.....	322
SYMPTOMS.....	323
TREATMENT.....	324
ILLUSTRATIVE CASES.....	324
10. CONGENITAL HEART DISEASE.....	328
ETIOLOGY.....	328
SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS.....	329
CLINICAL CLASSIFICATION.....	331
SPECIAL TYPES:	
CONGENITAL IDIOPATHIC HYPERTROPHY.....	333
BICUSPID AND SUPERNUMERARY VALVES AND CUSPS.....	334
CONGENITAL DEXTROCARDIA.....	335
INTERVENTRICULAR SEPTAL DEFECT.....	336
COARCTATION OF THE AORTA.....	336
PATENT DUCTUS ARTERIOSUS.....	338
CRITERIA FOR OPERATION.....	340
INTERAURICULAR SEPTAL DEFECTS.....	341
CONGENITAL HEART BLOCK.....	343
TETRALOGY OF FALLOT.....	347
COMPLETE PULMONARY ATRESIA.....	348
TREATMENT.....	351
PROGNOSIS.....	352
11. THE HEART IN THYROID DISEASE.....	353
HYPERTHYROIDISM.....	353
MECHANISM.....	353
SIGNS.....	353
PATHOLOGY.....	354
INCIDENCE.....	354
DIAGNOSIS.....	354
COURSE.....	356
TREATMENT.....	356
ILLUSTRATIVE CASES.....	359
HYPOTHYROIDISM.....	366
ETIOLOGY.....	366
SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS.....	367
COURSE.....	367
TREATMENT.....	368
ILLUSTRATIVE CASES.....	369
12. CARDIAC ARRHYTHMIAS.....	374
GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS.....	374
DIAGNOSIS.....	375
ILLUSTRATIVE CASES.....	376
SINUS MECHANISMS.....	376

THE HEART AND ASTHMA.....	461
DOES ASTHMA CAUSE HEART DISEASE?...	462
DIAGNOSTIC PROBLEMS.....	463
CARDIAC ASTHMA.....	466
PAROXYSMAL PULMONARY EDEMA	466
PRINCIPLES OF DIAGNOSIS	466
PRINCIPLES OF TREATMENT.....	468
17. CARDIAC PROBLEMS IN SURGICAL PRACTICE.	471
THE SURGICAL RISK.....	471
THE VALUE OF THE ELECTROCARDIOGRAM	473
THE CHOICE OF ANESTHETIC.....	474
CARDIAC ARREST DURING ANESTHESIA	474
CAN THE SURGICAL RISK BE IMPROVED? ..	476
POSTOPERATIVE CARDIAC ACCIDENTS	476
SURGICAL PROBLEMS OF CIRCULATORY IMPORTANCE IN THE DIAGNOSIS OF ABDOMINAL LESIONS	477
BILIARY TRACT DISEASE AND CORONARY DISEASE	481
TRAUMA AND THE HEART	486
PENETRATING WOUNDS	488
NON-PENETRATING WOUNDS	489
18. CARDIAC EMERGENCIES.	496
CHEST PAIN	496
DIFFERENTIAL DIAGNOSIS	497
DYSPNEA....	498
TYPES	499
TREATMENT.	499
SYNCOPE.	499
PALPITATION	501
WOUNDS OF THE HEART	502
PERICARDIAL EFFUSION	502
CONGESTIVE CARDIAC FAILURE	502
CARDIAC RESUSCITATION	502
TABLES FOR USE IN EMERGENCIES	504
ACUTE CORONARY OCCLUSION ..	504
HEART FAILURE.....	505
PAROXYSMAL TACHYCARDIAS	506
AURICULAR FLUTTER.....	507
AURICULAR FIBRILLATION	507
ADAMS-STOKES SEIZURES ..	508
EMBOLISM.....	509
PERICARDIAL EFFUSION ..	510
WOUNDS OF THE HEART.....	510
PERIPHERAL CIRCULATORY FAILURE ..	511
19. PHYSIOTHERAPY IN THE TREATMENT OF HEART DISEASE.....	512
GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS.	512
SPA TREATMENT.....	513
HYDROTHERAPY.....	514
MASSAGE	521
HELIOOTHERAPY	521
ELECTROTHERAPY.....	522
OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY.....	523
20. PRESCRIPTION OF EXERCISE.	526
GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS.....	526
THE HEART IN ATHLETICS.. ..	531
21. DIET IN HEART DISEASE.....	539
GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS.....	539
DIET IN: ANEMIA.....	541

CHAPTER	PAGE
ARTERIOSCLEROSIS.....	541
HYPERTENSION.....	543
OBESITY.....	544
RHEUMATIC HEART DISEASE.....	545
CARDIOVASCULAR SYPHILIS.....	546
CONGESTIVE FAILURE.....	548
THE HEART IN DEFICIENCY DISEASES.....	552
ILLUSTRATIVE CASES.....	556
22. THE SENILE HEART.....	558
TYPES.....	558
EXAMINATION.....	559
ELECTROCARDIOGRAM.....	560
TREATMENT.....	560
23. SOCIAL SERVICE IN THE TREATMENT OF HEART DISEASE.....	565
PROBLEMS INVOLVED.....	565
ILLUSTRATIVE CASES.....	567
24. AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF ELECTROCARDIOGRAPHY.....	574
HISTORY.....	574
THE APPARATUS.....	577
PHYSIOLOGIC PRINCIPLES.....	583
THE ELECTROCARDIOGRAM.....	587
TECHNICAL FAULTS.....	587
NORMAL WAVES.....	589
ALTERATIONS IN THE WAVES OF THE ELECTROCARDIOGRAM AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE.....	591
THE ELECTRICAL AXIS AND ITS DEVIATION.....	597
READING THE ELECTROCARDIOGRAM.....	601
SINUS MECHANISMS.....	603
PREMATURE CONTRACTIONS.....	608
AURICULAR.....	609
VENTRICULAR.....	611
THE PAROXYSMAL TACHYCARDIAS.....	612
AURICULAR.....	612
NODAL.....	613
VENTRICULAR.....	615
HEART BLOCK.....	615
ELECTROCARDIOGRAMS DURING ADAMS-STOKES SEIZURES.....	618
BUNDLE-BRANCH BLOCK.....	623
AURICULAR FLUTTER.....	626
AURICULAR FIBRILLATION.....	631
CORONARY ARTERY DISEASE INCLUDING INFARCTION.....	633
PRECORDIAL LEADS.....	637
DIAGNOSIS OF CORONARY OCCLUSION BY THE RHYTHM OF THE ELECTROCARDIOGRAM.....	644
ELECTROCARDIOGRAPHIC ALTERATIONS FOLLOWING DIGITALIS.....	646
THE ELECTROCARDIOGRAM IN CHILDREN.....	650
MISCELLANEOUS ELECTROCARDIOGRAPHIC PATTERNS.....	651
VENTRICULAR STRAIN.....	651
PERICARDITIS.....	654
WOUNDS OF THE HEART.....	655
DIABETES.....	656
MYXEDEMA.....	657

1

APPROACH TO THERAPY

INTRODUCTION

We are witnessing great advances in therapy today. Sulfanilamide and its derivatives are conquering infections of various types; newer forms of insulin have been perfected to bring greater comfort to the diabetic; in the treatment of the psychoses gratifying results have followed the use of newer remedies. Pyrexial therapy, the sex hormones, the vitamins, a variety of safer anesthetics reflect many advances in other fields. The treatment of diseases of the heart has not lagged behind. Today, more can be done for the cardiac invalid than was possible a decade ago. A better understanding of the mechanism of heart failure, a clearer concept of the use of digitalis, and the introduction of newer diuretics are only a few of the factors that enable the modern physician to bring a degree of relief to cardiac patients not dreamed of at the beginning of the present century.

The appearance on the scene of many laboratory methods of precision characterizes the modern era. While these attract a considerable amount of the attention of research investigators, they should not be allowed to replace the older methods of physical examination. We must realize that even the foremost among these, electrocardiography and roentgenography taken together, cannot furnish the amount of information that may be obtained from a carefully taken history and a thorough physical examination. All laboratory methods have great pitfalls for the ones who in the hurry that is typical of modern times lean upon them too heavily. Laboratory methods of precision are only aids to be sought in establishing a diagnosis that is suggested after all the facts in the case have been collected, recorded, and fully evaluated. If this procedure is always followed, often the diagnosis will stand out so clearly that there will be scant need for a number of expensive laboratory tests. For example, a good clinician will not permit a patient who has a precordial friction rub following an attack of agonizing chest pain to be moved any distance for the sole purpose of obtaining an electrocardiogram. Nor will a roentgen examination add a great deal to the patient's diagnosis when the Wassermann reaction is positive, the pulse is of the Corrigan type, and the apex beat is visible in the midaxillary line.

In some instances, however, after all available data are carefully considered, laboratory procedures will be necessary to help clarify a diagnosis. The Wassermann, for example, is a great help in making a decision as to therapy in a patient of 40 whose only lesion appears to be aortic regurgitation, and whose past history is negative for rheumatism and syphilis. In

some cases of suspected coronary occlusion, the entire examination of the patient may be negative and the diagnosis will be revealed only in the chest leads of the electrocardiogram. Often the electrocardiogram may be the sole evidence of the presence of acute myocarditis. However, the instances are few where the laboratory acts as the cornerstone in diagnosis. An attempt should be made in every case to arrive at the cardiac diagnosis unaided, for in this way the ability of the physician to diagnose heart disease will increase with his experience, and in emergencies he will find that he can direct treatment efficiently when laboratory aid is unavailable.

THE HISTORY

The best approach to therapy is a brief consideration of the methods commonly employed in arriving at a diagnosis of heart disease. Careful history taking remains the most important but often the most neglected feature of the entire examination. It should never be relegated to an assistant, for impressions that may be essential to diagnosis are made in taking the history. Furthermore, in certain types of heart disease, the diagnosis can be made on the history alone. I make a rule to take a long history but to write a short one.

The Patient's Description. It is wise to permit the patient to tell his own story and allow him plenty of time to review it completely. I share the patient's dislike for any system that entails the routine asking of a large number of questions by an office assistant who fills in a printed form, but perhaps this is only a personal expression of rebellion against the present-day system of regimentation. In any event, stereotyped questions usually receive the same type of answers, and although they may be very useful in subsequent research, this system deprives the physician of the opportunity of witnessing, in an informal friendly interview, the unfolding of the patient's personality with the story of his symptoms. Frequent interruptions confuse and irritate the patient and usually inhibit the growth of confidence in the physician that is so essential at the first interview. Let the patient talk. It is an easy matter to jot down roughly the important features of the narrative and either dictate or rewrite the history later. Of course, this freedom in the telling should not be allowed some patients who deal at length with multiple and irrelevant issues. However, even in these cases, much can be learned concerning the probable presence or absence of heart disease if the physician trains himself to be a good listener. Further amplification of important symptoms lightly touched upon by the patient may be obtained by asking a few direct questions at the end of the interview. As many as possible of the adjectives used by the patient in describing an important symptom should be recorded, using quotation marks. The description of the complaint at a subsequent visit by the use of the patient's own phrases establishes confidence in the physician. This is particularly true in regard to the variety of expressions used by patients in describing chest sensations. Many are fearful of the diagnosis of angina, yet desire

to give the physician the most accurate account possible of the chest symptom; consequently their descriptions may be rich in clarifying similes.

The age of the patient is a most important fact in itself in cardiovascular diagnosis. Certain types of heart disease are more frequent in certain age groups. For example, under two years of age, it is unusual to meet any form of heart disease other than congenital. After this age and during the first decade of life, we have to consider rheumatic carditis plus congenital heart disease. From this time until 40, rheumatic heart disease dominates. After 40, cardiovascular syphilis becomes a consideration, and between 40 and 60, coronary and hypertensive cardiovascular diseases predominate, while congenital defects are very rare and the rheumatic lesions very infrequent. From 60 to 80, coronary or arteriosclerotic and hypertensive varieties hold the stage; these types are usually present as the final curtain falls.

The sex of the patient is an important consideration in etiology. For example, it is a statistical fact that the coronary and syphilitic types of heart disease occur with greater frequency among males. Calcific aortic stenosis likewise affects men more often than women. Rheumatic and hypertensive heart disease, however, seem to claim an equal number of victims from both sexes. Thyrotoxic heart disease, on the other hand, is more prevalent among women.

Hereditary Factors. It is very important to inquire carefully into the causes of death of all near relatives. From the frequency with which I have encountered rheumatic, hypertensive, and coronary artery disease in members of the same family, it appears that the incidence of these diseases is influenced by hereditary factors. A positive family history always adds weight to the diagnosis of angina when the cause of an atypical chest pain in an active business man in middle life is considered.

The past medical history has a direct bearing on the type of heart disease that may be present. If several typical attacks of rheumatic arthritis occurred in childhood, evidence enough is at hand to suspect this type of cardiac involvement. Chorea may be viewed in the same light. Growing pains, quinsy, tonsillitis may or may not be rheumatic in nature but provide evidence that should be weighed carefully. "Usual diseases of childhood" is a routine meaningless phrase that appears on nearly all hospital records. Diseases, if recalled, should always be listed by name. Diphtheria and scarlet fever usually have no effect in later years on the cardiac status of the patient.

Syphilis. Inquiry as to the presence or absence of a syphilitic lesion should always be made toward the end of the interview. This question is a very important one, particularly in patients in middle life, who exhibit signs of aortic disease. It should never be asked in a tone that invites denial. If the patient is a woman, a visible primary lesion may not have been present. In this event, clues will have to be sought carefully during the subsequent physical examination.

CARDIAC SYMPTOMS

In each patient it is important to attempt to establish accurately the date of the first appearance of cardiac symptoms. A brief summary of the progress of each symptom to the date of the examination should follow. Cardiac symptoms of importance are chest pain, abnormalities of breathing or dyspnea, and palpitation. They are described differently by each patient because the nervous mechanism that detects and interprets them is a factor that shows considerable individual variation. In no case will the symptoms be directly proportional to the amount of structural change producing them. Moreover, they may all be present in an oversensitive individual in the absence of any type of organic cardiac disease. They may appear at one time and not at another, for example, when fatigue enters the picture and lowers the patient's threshold of perception.

Chest pain is the most important of all cardiac symptoms. Care should be exercised in its description in the history, for in a few instances, it may be the only positive finding in the entire case record. If the chest pain or oppression is transient, and definitely related to exertion, and relieved by rest and nitroglycerine, the diagnosis of coronary disease is at once suggested. Pain having the same qualities and significance may be experienced in regions distant from the heart—for example, in the neck, jaw, shoulder, arms or even the abdomen.

The pain that accompanies occlusion of a coronary artery or any of its branches usually can be differentiated clinically from the pain of angina. When occlusion occurs, the transient pain of angina gives way to a prolonged agonizing type of pain that is accompanied generally by marked changes in the appearance of the patient. The pallor, sweating, and shock that accompany occlusion are important points to elicit and record if, as is usually the case, the person who witnessed the attack accompanies the patient to the office.

Chest pain may be a feature of other types of heart disease. A dull precordial ache is complained of by patients suffering from effort syndrome. It often accompanies the overactive heart of thyrotoxicosis and may be present in patients who have cardiac hypertrophy from any cause, but particularly if it is of the hypertensive type. The nervous system of some patients is unfortunately very closely in tune with the cardiac action. Consequently, irregularities such as frequently recurring premature beats, will be readily detected and may produce painful stimuli. At times they may be the cause of knife-like pains in the cardiac area. Acute pericarditis may produce a precordial pain that is increased by respiration owing to the extension of the inflammatory process to the outer layer of the pericardium and thence to the pleura or diaphragm. If effusion follows, the pain may disappear entirely or it may give way to a dull precordial ache.

Aortic aneurysm by its growth and erosion is responsible for a severe and constant type of chest pain. The pain produced by dissection of an

aortic aneurysm is perhaps the most excruciating variety experienced by man. It is sudden in onset, of maximum intensity from the start and is referred to the front or side of the chest or to the abdomen. Patients often describe it as "tearing." It may, however, be confused with the pain of coronary occlusion in some cases (page 323).

Dyspnea has many causes, but there are usually three types commonly described in relation to diseases of the heart. In early cardiac failure the patient becomes conscious of the respiratory act. As the lungs become engorged following left ventricular failure, reflexes to the respiratory center usually increase the rate of breathing. As failure progresses, dyspnea may be present at complete bed rest. We use the term "orthopnea" when the dyspnea is extreme and the respiratory act demands the patient's whole attention and much of his failing strength. The patient with orthopnea is forced to sit up in bed in order to employ the accessory muscles of respiration as well as the effects of gravity to relieve the overloaded pulmonary circulation.

An increasing degree of dyspnea usually parallels the loss of cardiac reserve and is valuable in estimating prognosis in any patient under treatment. The amount of breathlessness that follows the same task assigned at each visit should always be carefully observed and recorded.

Cardiac Asthma. The sudden attack of dyspnea that often follows acute failure of the left side of the heart during sleep when the head and chest are low, is known as paroxysmal cardiac dyspnea or cardiac asthma. These distressing episodes frequently occur toward the end of life when the types of heart disease that place the extra load on the left ventricle are common. It is important to record the date of onset of these seizures in the history.

Cheyne-Stokes Respiration. In the advanced stages of some types of heart disease, poor cerebral circulation following sclerosis and declining cardiac reserve markedly affects the respiratory center. Periods of apnea or cessation of breathing alternate with periods of increased breathing or hyperpnea producing the well-known clinical picture of Cheyne-Stokes respiration. Relatives who are constantly in attendance often give accurate descriptions of this symptom which, when marked, indicates a poor prognosis.

Palpitation or consciousness of the beating of the heart is a very common but a much less important complaint. The patient usually classes several types of cardiac happenings under this heading, which must be carefully sorted out when the history is taken. The occasional disturbances of the heart's rhythm caused by extrasystoles reach consciousness and are classed as "palpitation." The sudden onset of paroxysms of fibrillation, flutter or tachycardia are usually felt by the patient and also described under the heading of "palpitation." Consequently, when palpitation is the symptom, question the patient in detail to bring out the exact nature of the disorder. Palpitation is a very common symptom in effort syndrome and thyrotoxicosis. Many of the patients complaining of palpitation will be found

accumulate in the pleural cavity (hydrothorax), in the abdomen (ascites) (Fig. 2), and finally become generalized (anasarca).

Cardiac edema is a symptom of hypertension in the capillary bed and varies with the venous pressure. It accompanies right-heart failure and conditions that prevent proper diastolic filling (chronic constrictive pericarditis). Left-heart failure and shock are not accompanied ordinarily by edema because they produce a diminution of the blood flow that is not associated with increase in capillary pressure.

Edema of the feet may be present in renal disease. Such edema is usually worse in the morning and is associated with marked swelling of the face. In the later months of pregnancy, edema of the feet may be present owing



FIG. 2. Ascites accompanying congestive cardiac failure.

to uterine pressure on the large veins (page 445). Other abdominal tumors may also cause edema and lead the physician to suspect the presence of cardiac disease. Severe grades of anemia can produce all the symptoms of cardiac disease, including edema. Myxedema (see Fig. 142) will rarely be mistaken for the edema of cardiac failure because of the thickening of the skin that accompanies this deficiency state and the failure of the extremities to show pitting on pressure. Rarely Milroy's disease (persistent hereditary trophedema) may simulate cardiac edema but its presence in several generations of the family and the demarcation between swollen and nonswollen parts serve to make the distinction evident. In beriberi of the wet type (see Fig. 163) a generalized edema may occur. In this disease an accumulation of fluid in the heart muscle has also been described.

INSPECTION

Eyes. In the physical examination of the patient inspection of the eye grounds is commonly omitted. This is unfortunate when we consider the amount of information that may be obtained by one familiar with the use of an ophthalmoscope. Many times the mark of a previously existing hypertension will be seen in the retina, and this will support the diagnosis of hypertensive cardiovascular disease if the blood pressure happens to be low at the time of the examination. The recent use of slit-lamp inspection of the small capillaries of the conjunctiva has shown that these vessels exhibit changes in their structure suggestive of hypertension even earlier than the arterioles of the retina. Gross inspection of the conjunctiva for petechial hemorrhages is also important in cases where subacute bacterial endocarditis is suspected.

The presence of exophthalmos and related eye signs of hyperthyroidism may be important observations in explaining the cause of a persistent tachycardia. The pupillary reflex to light as well as irregularity of the pupils may lend support to a diagnosis of syphilis. It is well to keep in mind the fact that over 50 per cent of the cases of cardiovascular syphilis are complicated by neurosyphilis.

Infection about the margins of the teeth should be carefully noted as well as all nonvital and abscessed teeth. The pharynx should be inspected for infected lymph follicles, and the tonsils carefully examined for evidence of hypertrophy or infection. The condition of the anterior pillars is important when considering tonsillar infection, and the presence of tags may have a decided influence in favoring the recurrence of the upper respiratory infections that are so dangerous in rheumatic subjects. The lymph nodes draining all these structures should be palpated carefully.

Neck. Examination of the neck furnishes many important clues. Careful inspection of the vessels may permit the observer to diagnose the nature of the cardiac arrhythmias. For example, detection of abnormal venous pulsations in the jugular veins of a patient with a ventricular rate of 40 may clinch the diagnosis of heart block, while a more rapid series of waves may be seen in the jugulars in cases of auricular flutter. The engorgement and pulsation of the jugulars in cases of congestive failure and chronic constrictive pericarditis (see Fig. 82) signify delay in the return of the venous blood to the heart and increase in the pressure on the venous side. Consequently, it is evident that a close study of the neck veins is a great aid in the diagnosis and treatment of the cardiac patient.

Increased pulsations in the carotid arteries occur in patients suffering from aortic regurgitation, hypertension, and aneurysm. In the latter instance tracheal tug may also be palpable. The region of the carotid sinus is important, since pressure here in hypersensitive patients may cause syncope (page 378).

Chest. Careful inspection of the chest of the cardiac patient will richly reward the examiner. Slight but definite bulging of the left side of the

precordium (Fig. 3) usually indicates cardiac disease in youth before the calcification of the costal cartilages; consequently, either rheumatic heart disease or a congenital defect should be suspected. Kyphosis, scoliosis, and at times depressed sternum or funnel-chest are important clues, since they may so compress and displace the heart as to interfere seriously with its

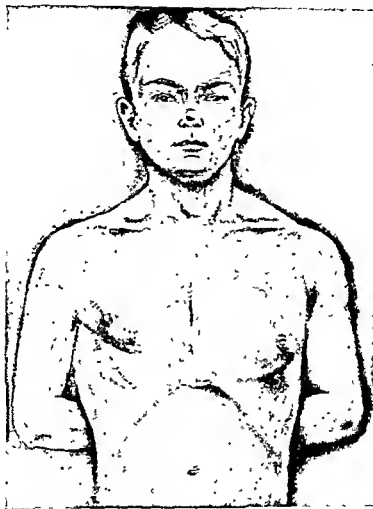


FIG. 3. Precordial prominence in a child caused by a greatly enlarged heart.

action. In thin-chested individuals an apex beat visible in the sixth interspace beyond the midclavicular line is evidence of enlargement of the left ventricle. Right ventricular enlargement is suggested by pulsations in the third and fourth interspaces to the left of the sternum. Retraction of the whole thoracic wall about the region of the cardiac apex is suggestive of an adherent pericardium. Although rare sights today, pulsating masses on the anterior thoracic wall suggest aneurysm of the aorta (see Fig. 91)

PALPATION

Thrills palpable over any area of the chest are important indications of narrowing valvular orifices. They are best appreciated by light palpation. A diastolic thrill over the region of the cardiac apex suggests mitral stenosis. When a rough systolic murmur is heard over the second and third interspaces to the right of the sternum, the presence of a systolic thrill in this region will add considerable weight to the diagnosis of aortic stenosis. Rarely an aortic aneurysm will produce a systolic thrill in the same area. A thrill over the region of the third interspace to the left of the sternum points to a congenital defect of the interventricular septum. When a thrill is felt over the pulmonary valve area, it is generally associated with stenosis of this valve and is usually congenital in origin. When a continuous thrill is present in this area accompanied by loud systolic and diastolic murmurs, a patent ductus arteriosus may be suspected.

PERCUSSION

In spite of many opinions to the contrary in literature, I still believe that percussion is a worth-while method for estimating cardiac size. However, the necessary degree of skill in this branch of physical diagnosis can only be acquired by constant daily practice. In the majority of patients the size of the heart can be approximately obtained without resorting to more accurate roentgen methods. Corvisart^{73, 245} said,

Percussion of the thorax is the best touchstone we have to investigate or at least clarify our knowledge concerning many of the lesions of this cavity. By its means we can demonstrate an increase in the volume of the heart; one may even go so far as to estimate the severity of the lesion; it cannot be used too frequently; by means of tactile sense a deaf person may make use of percussion.

The left cardiac border should be percussed first. The change of note in normal patients will be found to occur 8 to 9 cm. to the left of the mid-sternal line in the fifth interspace. When this border is determined, the midclavicular line can be indicated on the chest surface and the relationship noted. The remainder of the left border of the heart can then be completed, percussing in each interspace from axilla to sternum until a change in note from resonance to dullness is heard. Care should be taken in the third interspace, for lesions affecting the pulmonary artery and pulmonary conus (mitral stenosis, patent ductus arteriosus) may cause an increase in the diameter at this level. A change may be noted by careful percussion, even in cases where the apex beat is in a normal position.

Right Border. In the percussion of the right border of cardiac dullness, more difficulty is usually encountered. This border follows the right sternal margin to the fourth or fifth interspace where it bulges slightly outward, and with care can be percussed for a maximum distance of 5 cm. from the midsternal line. Percussion over the sternum usually sends the whole

structure into vibration and in the presence of this resonance, localization of the heart border is impossible. Likewise fine differences in the percussion note here are scarcely appreciated in patients with emphysema and obesity. In determining cardiac size in these cases the roentgen methods have their greatest usefulness.

If in the course of the examination, I fail to locate the apex beat, I always attempt to outline the heart by percussion before proceeding with fluoroscopy. The opportunity of checking the result by an orthodiagram keeps alive my belief in the value of ordinary percussion. This special training

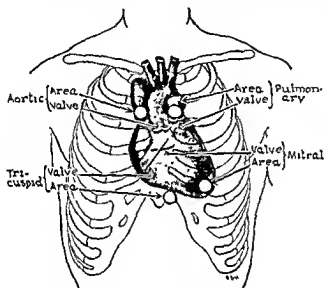


FIG. 4. The valve areas and the anatomic location of the heart valves.

of the senses of touch and hearing proves a valuable asset at the bedside far from the roentgen laboratory. The determination of heart size is the most important single feature of the examination of the cardiac patient, since an enlarged heart is usually a diseased heart.

Aorta. While I believe that the "heart dulls somewhat the ringing resonance" sufficient to permit its outline by percussion, I do not hold the same opinion in regard to the great vessels at the base, when they are normal in size. If the aorta is inspected in the cadaver, it will be seen to arch in a direction away from the chest wall. In addition, the vessels at the base of the heart are surrounded by lung tissue. Consequently, unless the aorta is greatly enlarged, I doubt my ability to indicate its diameters with any degree of accuracy by percussing the anterior chest wall.

AUSCULTATION

In auscultation of the heart, it is important to examine the patient both in the upright and recumbent positions. Often certain types of murmurs will be heard only after exercise when the patient is lying on the left side.

Auscultation should be carried out over all the cardiac valve areas (Fig. 4). I prefer to use the combination type of stethoscope (Fig. 5), since murmurs not audible with the bell type of chest piece may at times be clearly heard when the Bowles attachment is used. The faint murmur in early mitral stenosis usually is heard best when the bell of the stethoscope is used, while the soft diastolic murmur of aortic insufficiency is detected best by the Bowles attachment.

HEART SOUNDS AND MURMURS

In cardiac auscultation it is important to record the rate, rhythm, character and intensity of the heart sounds and the quality, area of distribution and the place in the cardiac cycle of any murmurs present. Two sounds are normally heard over the heart area. The first sound is louder and lower in pitch than the second sound. Over the base (aortic and pulmonary areas) the second sound is louder and higher in pitch than the first. The aortic second sound in adults usually equals the pulmonic second sound in intensity. The closure of the tricuspid and mitral valves, and the contraction of the ventricular muscle are the two elements that combine to make up the first heart sound. The second sound is produced by the closure of the aortic and pulmonic valves at the end of cardiac systole.

The first sound of the heart at the apex is normally accentuated after exercise and during fever. Abnormal accentuation, however, may accompany mitral stenosis, effort syndrome, thyrotoxicosis and the paroxysmal tachycardias.

Decrease in intensity of the first sound of the heart may be normal in the presence of obesity and emphysema. Decrease from day to day may occur if there is an accumulating pericardial effusion or it may accompany infarction of a large section of the cardiac wall. In peripheral circulatory collapse where there is a diminished venous return to the heart (shock, hemorrhage) decrease in the intensity of the heart sounds may be noted. Variations in the intensity of the heart sounds takes place in the cardiac arrhythmias (premature beats, heart block, auricular fibrillation).

The aortic second sound is louder than the pulmonic second sound in individuals over 60, but hypertension in the systemic circulation may cause this accentuation to occur at any age. Degenerative changes in the aortic valve (arteriosclerosis and syphilis) may sometimes change the character of the aortic second sound in the absence of hypertension.

Aortic and mitral stenosis, by decreasing the amount of blood ejected into the aorta at each systole, may be accompanied by diminution of the aortic second sound. Disease of the valve cusps, preventing proper closure, may be another factor, while sudden left ventricular failure produces the same effect. Premature beats may have just sufficient force to open the valves, in which event the amount of blood received by the aorta is small, and the aortic second sound is weak. Many premature beats do not open the pulmonic and aortic valves at all, consequently the second sound is

absent. In hypotension, in certain anemias, in prolonged fevers, or following peripheral failure, there may be a diminution of the aortic second sound.

Accentuation of the pulmonic second sound indicates increase in the pressure in the lesser or pulmonic circuit. This may be secondary to a left ventricular failure or mechanical defect of the mitral valves, or it may point to a pulmonary hypertension that is seen in some conditions, for example, tuberculosis, emphysema, or pulmonary sclerosis that are forerunners of a right-sided heart failure.

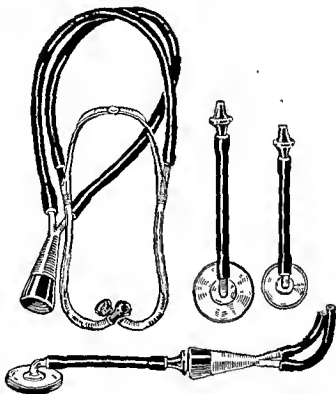


FIG. 5 Pilling-Bowles combination stethoscope with diaphragm and Ford chest pieces

A diminished pulmonic second sound may be a danger signal of a failing right heart. Likewise in the presence of an active stenosing process in the pulmonary valve leaflets, the pulmonic second sound may gradually diminish until it disappears. Additional signs over this area that should be searched for to confirm this impression are a rough systolic murmur and a palpable thrill.

Splitting of the heart sounds occurs in health; many times it is related to respiration. Splitting of the first heart sound likewise occurs in patients suffering from heart disease, for example, in intraventricular or bundle-branch block where the ventricles receive their impulses at different times and consequently contract asynchronously (page 623). A splitting of

the second sound at the base of the heart is more common and is caused by asynchronous closure of the aortic and pulmonary valves. It may be present normally during certain phases of respiration or it may follow bundle-branch block or premature ventricular beats. It may accompany either pulmonic or systemic hypertension.

Gallop. In children and young adults, a third heart sound may be heard between the apex beat and the left sternal border in the fifth interspace. This is a normal finding, but at times it may be impossible by auscultation to differentiate it from the extra sound that makes up a gallop rhythm. In some cases the clinical findings serve to make the distinction.

The term "gallop" applied to this finding is a good one and should be retained because of its resemblance, especially when the heart rate is above 100, to the sound of the hoof beats of a galloping horse. Potain originally described three varieties of gallop rhythm: protodiastolic (early diastolic), mesodiastolic and the presystolic (late diastolic). Clinically only two types are important. The more common presystolic type presumably is caused by an audible auricular contraction and never occurs in its absence. The protodiastolic gallop is a sound that occurs approximately 0.12 to 0.20 second after the beginning of the second sound (Wolferth and Margolies). Gallop sounds are heard best with the patient recumbent and are variable, appearing at one examination only to be absent at the next. They are altered in the position they occupy in the cardiac cycle and in intensity by changes in the cardiac rate.²⁸⁸ It is well worth while to study these sounds, for they often appear with cardiac failure to disappear again as the patient improves following successful therapy. They may be produced by either right- or left-sided failure and are supposedly the result of heightened intra-auricular pressure, causing the onrushing blood in diastole to strike the weakened ventricular wall with more than the usual force.

Precordial Friction Sounds. The recognition of precordial friction sounds may be helpful in diagnosis and therapy. The appearance of a precordial friction rub early in the course of some cases of rheumatic infection may be important in differential diagnosis. Friction rubs appearing in patients of older age groups following episodes of chest pain suggest anterior coronary occlusion. The pericardial friction is produced by an area of acute pericarditis and is usually a harsh, leathery, to-and-fro sound that coincides with the heart sound and in consequence is independent of respiratory movements. In some instances the friction rub may occupy systole alone, in which event it may be difficult to distinguish from a murmur. However, friction rubs change from day to day. They likewise may alter their character with firmer pressure of the stethoscope bell or with change in position of the patient. On auscultation their point of origin seems to be nearer the ear than the underlying heart sounds, which at times are blotted out by the loudness and harshness of the friction.

Clinical Significance of Murmurs. Laennec, who was first to describe cardiac murmurs in 1819, believed that they were always produced by organic change in the valve leaflets. Later at autopsies he observed normal

valves in patients who had loud murmurs during life. This caused him to take the opposite view; and he stated that murmurs were of no value in diagnosis. Cardiac murmurs may prove to be just as confusing to the physician of today if more attention is focused on them and less on the patient as a whole. Murmurs comprise only one feature of the examination and should always be interpreted in the light of other findings. The presence of murmurs does not always mean heart disease. For example, if a loud systolic murmur heard over the pulmonary area in recumbency in a young person is the only finding on physical examination and if it disappears or becomes less intense when the patient assumes the upright position, no heart disease is present. No treatment for the heart is needed. If the patient has been previously informed about the finding and the word "murmur" has become fixed in his mind, the task to convince him that he has a normal heart is not an easy one. Many women during pregnancy develop systolic pulmonary murmurs that should occasion no alarm concerning the integrity of the cardiovascular system, since they usually disappear following delivery. Systolic murmurs at the apex in the absence of cardiac enlargement or previous history of rheumatic infection may be viewed in a similar light.

Timing. Murmurs are either systolic or diastolic in time. It is a matter of primary importance to establish their place in the cardiac cycle, otherwise errors in diagnosis are apt to occur. Many physicians as a result of long experience never have to give much thought to the timing of murmurs. Mitral stenosis, for example, is recognized as soon as heard by its characteristic low-pitched presystolic rumble. In similar manner, we learn to know which dog in the neighborhood is keeping us awake at night by the pitch and other qualities of the bark. Experienced examiners often depend on the rhythm of the heart to time the murmur. However, in the presence of an arrhythmia or with rapid pulse rates, this method may fail. It is far safer to time the murmur by watching or palpating the apex beat or the carotid artery. Riesman was the first to point out a very useful method for timing accurately an apical murmur; this method he referred to as transdigital auscultation.³¹³ I have found his suggestion helpful in teaching undergraduates to time murmurs during their first days on the medical wards. The following description of the method has been furnished by Dr. Riesman.

It is necessary to employ a diaphragm stethoscope and not one of the bell type. The index or middle finger is flexed at a right angle, and its tip is placed directly over the apex beat. The stethoscope is then laid on the horizontal phalanx of the flexed finger at the angle (Fig. 6). It will be found that murmurs may be heard nearly as well through the finger as when the stethoscope is placed directly on the chest; and, since auscultation and palpation are performed at the same place, it is obvious that one can tell readily whether a murmur occurs before the finger is lifted, synchronously

with the lifting, or afterward. The method also serves well for eliciting the Duroziez murmur in cases of aortic insufficiency. This murmur, really a double murmur, is heard in the femoral artery when pressure is made on it with a stethoscope just below Poupart's ligament. Sometimes the pressure is distinctly painful; at others, the stethoscope disk is too large for making satisfactory compression. If the artery is not properly compressed, only one sound is heard. By transdigital auscultation, the drawbacks just cited are obviated, the to and fro murmur can be readily brought out by regulated pressure with the tip of the finger.

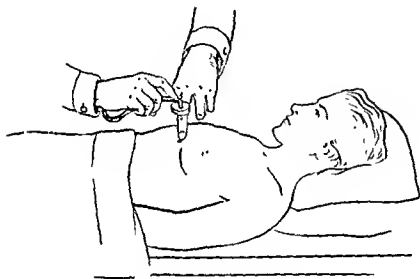


FIG. 6. Transdigital auscultation.

A murmur is systolic when it occurs between the beginning of the first sound and the beginning of the second, and it is diastolic if it occurs in the longer pause between the second sound and the succeeding first sound. A murmur heard in late diastole and continuing up to the succeeding first sound is spoken of as *presystolic*. The heart sound may be replaced by a murmur or both heart sound and murmur may be heard. Diastolic murmurs are more serious than systolic murmurs, and short murmurs heard with difficulty may be much more important in indicating serious cardiac disease than long and loud murmurs that are readily detected. For example, the earliest murmur that appears in mitral stenosis is a very short mid-diastolic type that often is heard only after exercise, with the patient lying on the left side. The earliest sign in aortic regurgitation may be a very faint diastolic murmur heard in the aortic area or along the left sternal border.

Determining Site of Origin. It is important to determine the valve area where the murmur has its greatest intensity. Murmurs having their

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Timing. Murmurs are either systolic or diastolic in time. It is a matter of primary importance to establish their place in the cardiac cycle, otherwise errors in diagnosis are apt to occur. Many physicians as a result of long experience never have to give much thought to the timing of murmurs. Mitral stenosis, for example, is recognized as soon as heard by its characteristic low-pitched presystolic rumble. In similar manner, we learn to know which dog in the neighborhood is keeping us awake at night by the pitch and other qualities of the bark. Experienced examiners often depend on the rhythm of the heart to time the murmur. However, in the presence of an arrhythmia or with rapid pulse rates, this method may fail. It is far safer to time the murmur by watching or palpating the apex beat or the carotid artery. Riesman was the first to point out a very useful method for timing accurately an apical murmur; this method he referred to as transdigital auscultation.³¹³ I have found his suggestion helpful in teaching undergraduates to time murmurs during their first days on the medical wards. The following description of the method has been furnished by Dr. Riesman.

It is necessary to employ a diaphragm stethoscope and not one of the bell type. The index or middle finger is flexed at a right angle, and its tip is placed directly over the apex beat. The stethoscope is then laid on the horizontal phalanx of the flexed finger at the angle (Fig. 6). It will be found that murmurs may be heard nearly as well through the finger as when the stethoscope is placed directly on the chest; and, since auscultation and palpation are performed at the same place, it is obvious that one can tell readily whether a murmur occurs before the finger is lifted, synchronously

with the lifting, or afterward. The method also serves well for eliciting the Duroziez murmur in cases of aortic insufficiency. This murmur, really a double murmur, is heard in the femoral artery when pressure is made on it with a stethoscope just below Poupart's ligament. Sometimes the pressure is distinctly painful; at others, the stethoscope disk is too large for making satisfactory compression. If the artery is not properly compressed, only one sound is heard. By transdigital auscultation, the drawbacks just cited are obviated, the to and fro murmur can be readily brought out by regulated pressure with the tip of the finger.

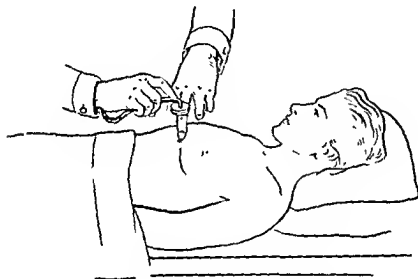


FIG. 6. Transdigital auscultation.

A murmur is systolic when it occurs between the beginning of the first sound and the beginning of the second, and it is diastolic if it occurs in the longer pause between the second sound and the succeeding first sound. A murmur heard in late diastole and continuing up to the succeeding first sound is spoken of as presystolic. The heart sound may be replaced by a murmur or both heart sound and murmur may be heard. Diastolic murmurs are more serious than systolic murmurs, and short murmurs heard with difficulty may be much more important in indicating serious cardiac disease than long and loud murmurs that are readily detected. For example, the earliest murmur that appears in mitral stenosis is a very short mid-diastolic type that often is heard only after exercise, with the patient lying on the left side. The earliest sign in aortic regurgitation may be a very faint diastolic murmur heard in the aortic area or along the left sternal border.

Determining Site of Origin. It is important to determine the valve area where the murmur has its greatest intensity. Murmurs having their

origin in the mitral valve are best heard in the region of the apex heart, murmurs arising from the pulmonary valve over the second interspace to the left of the sternum, while those having their origin in the aortic valve are heard over the second interspace to the right of the sternum. In the latter instance, an exception to this rule should be noted. In some cases of rheumatic aortic regurgitation, especially in children, the diastolic murmur is heard best along the left sternal border and may appear to be most intense over the third or fourth interspace close to the sternum.

Where a murmur is heard with equal intensity over two areas, it may be hard to determine its exact point of origin. However, if the murmur decreases in intensity, as the stethoscope moves away from one valve area toward another, the murmur probably originates at the first area. If, on the other hand, the murmur, after diminishing, again increases in intensity, as another valve area is approached, separate murmurs are probably present. The likelihood is even greater if the pitch and intensity of the second murmur differ from the one originally heard.

The intensity of any murmur is no criterion of the seriousness of the lesion producing it. A small amount of regurgitation at the mitral orifice may cause a loud murmur while a more serious leak may produce a murmur quite difficult to detect or no murmur may be heard at all. At times in patients under constant observation, if a change can be demonstrated in the quality of the murmur from day to day, this may indicate the progression of a lesion of the valvular structure, for example, the growth of vegetations in subacute bacterial endocarditis.

It is well to adopt some uniform system of terminology in referring to the quality, intensity, and duration of both heart sounds and murmurs. This avoids the use of many indefinite terms that only serve to reveal the uncertainty that exists in the mind of the examiner. In Table I the terms in larger type (e.g., **FAINT**) are recommended by the American Heart Association for routine use.²⁸¹ Those in smaller type (e.g., **Weak**) are regarded as unsatisfactory (although permissible) synonyms.

Some murmurs may be accentuated by exercise and disappear when the patient rests. This is particularly true of the presystolic murmur of early mitral stenosis. Hence, a good rule to follow if no murmurs are heard is to auscult again in recumbency after mild exercise. Murmurs are better transmitted at the end of expiration when less air is in the lungs. In fact, faint diastolic aortic murmurs may be detected only at the end of expiration with the patient leaning forward.

Cardiorespiratory murmurs usually heard over the lung margins should be easily detected, for they are always systolic and are always influenced by respiration. Harmless or functional murmurs are most common over the second interspace to the left of the sternum. In severe anemia and hyperthyroidism systolic functional murmurs are not uncommon.

The intensity of any murmur depends upon the velocity of the blood stream at the moment as well as upon the diameter of the valve orifice producing the murmur. The intensity determines how far from the heart the

TABLE I

TERMS TO BE USED IN DESCRIBING HEART SOUNDS AND MURMURS*

Heart Sounds

INTENSITY	PITCH	QUALITY	DURATION	TIME
NORMAL		NORMAL	NORMAL	
FAINT		SHARP	SHORT	
Weak		Snapping		
Distant		Valvular		
Muffled				
LOUD		BOOMING	PROLONGED	
Accentuated		Muscular		
Increased				
ABSENT		SPLIT		
Replaced by		REDUPLICATED		
a murmur		RINGING		
		Metallic		
		Bell-like		
		Tambour		
		Hollow		

Murmurs

FAINT	HIGH	BLOWING	SHORT	SYSTOLIC
Soft				
	MEDIUM	HARSH	MODERATE	EARLY SYSTOLIC
		Rough		
		Coarse		
LOUD	LOW	MUSICAL	LONG	LATE SYSTOLIC
		RUMBLING		DIASTOLIC
		CRESCENDO		EARLY DIASTOLIC
		DECRESCENDO		MID-DIASTOLIC
				PRESYSTOLIC
				(Late Diastolic)

monic and aortic valves accompanies stenosis of these orifices. Diastolic murmurs are of greater value in diagnosis. When heard over the mitral area, they indicate stenosis; at the aortic and pulmonic areas, insufficiency. It is unwise to make a diagnosis of a valvular lesion based on the murmur alone. Search should always be made for other signs that may complete the picture. For example, when aortic stenosis is suspected, a thrill over the aortic area accompanying the murmur strengthens the diagnosis. Likewise, the heart should be enlarged and show a characteristic shape on fluoroscopy, and the form of the pulse wave will be suggestive. When aortic regurgitation is suspected, confirming evidence may be present in the peripheral circulation. In making the diagnosis of valvular lesions, it is also well to remember that lesions of the mitral and aortic valves are much more frequently encountered clinically, while lesions of pulmonic and tricuspid valves are rare.

The murmur of patent ductus arteriosus deserves separate comment. It is continuous (both systolic and diastolic in time) and is heard with maximum intensity over the second left intercostal space. The pulmonic second sound is often reduplicated, is always accentuated and may even in some cases be palpable. The murmur of patent ductus arteriosus is transmitted along the pulmonary artery in the direction of the clavicle.

Continuous murmurs, usually with systolic accentuation, are likewise heard over other arteriovenous communications (or aneurysms), congenital or acquired. A thrill may be palpable over the site of the communication, which is usually in the extremities.

The peripheral circulatory signs that point to an aortic lesion may not be present when the leak is a slight one but occur when the circulation is open and regurgitation free. The increased pulse pressure that accompanies aortic regurgitation is visible in patients of medium build in a dancing or throbbing of all arteries, most clearly seen in the carotids. When it is present to a considerable degree in the suprasternal notch, care should be taken not to make the diagnosis of aneurysm. The collapsing or Corrigan type of pulse is present in aortic regurgitation, the systolic blood pressure is increased, and the diastolic pressure is abnormally low (usually 30 to 50 mm.). A capillary pulse may be present and abnormal sounds may be heard on auscultation over the large peripheral arteries (Duroziez's sign—pistol-shot sound).

The diastolic murmurs most often encountered are the aortic and mitral. Little trouble should arise in differentiating them if their characteristic features are kept in mind. The aortic diastolic murmur has a high pitch, a blowing quality, and occurs in early diastole closely following the second heart sound. It is usually heard best along the left sternal border when the patient is in the upright position; it may be transmitted over a wide area. The mitral diastolic murmur, on the other hand, occurs in mid or late diastole, has a very low rumbling or crescendo quality and is heard best in the region of the apex beat, with the patient in the left lateral position in recumbency. The mitral diastolic murmur is heard over a very

small area in the region of the cardiac apex, and, unlike the aortic diastolic murmur, is separated from the second sound of the heart by a short interval. The mitral diastolic murmur is heard best with the bell type of stethoscope, while the aortic diastolic murmur is more readily distinguished when the Bowles attachment is used.

Graham-Steell Murmur. While aortic and mitral diastolic murmurs nearly always point to the presence of disease valve leaflets, on rare occasions these murmurs may be functional. For example, dilatation of the aortic ring by hypertension may be accompanied by a short diastolic murmur. A similar increase in the pressure in the pulmonary circuit in advanced mitral stenosis may, in rare instances, be associated with a functional diastolic murmur that can be heard over the pulmonic area. This is the Graham-Steell murmur. Finally, in the presence of left ventricular dilatation either secondary to hypertension or acute rheumatic myocarditis, a mid-diastolic murmur may be heard over the mitral area, simulating mitral stenosis. This diastolic murmur may disappear when the myocardium recovers from the severe infection or when the acute left ventricular strain is relieved.

Austin-Flint Murmur. In some cases of aortic insufficiency the regurgitant column of blood may float the mitral leaflets into coaptation. Consequently, when auricular contraction occurs forcing the blood into the ventricle, these leaflets vibrate, and a presystolic murmur is heard in the region of the apex. This is the Austin-Flint murmur. When present, it may not be easy to differentiate from the diastolic murmur of organic mitral disease. However, if an apical presystolic thrill is palpable, organic mitral stenosis is more apt to be the diagnosis. A small pulse, instead of one of the Corrigan variety, likewise suggests a mitral lesion.

For recording the signs elicited at the different valve areas, I have used the system recommended by Segall.³³⁸ This graphic method will be employed in some of the subsequent case records to avoid long descriptions. Study of Fig. 7 will enable the reader to become familiar with these symbols and their meanings.

Amplification Mechanisms. Until recently the unaided senses have been the only means of diagnosis of heart disease at the bedside. Constant practice makes the ear of the clinician keen in its analysis of the heart sounds. His skill, however, has natural limitations, for he can only interpret those sounds that fall within the range of perception of the human ear. Again the range may be variable, since sounds clearly heard by one examiner may not be appreciated by another. Experience and practice serve to widen the range of sound perception within certain limits, beyond which man must depend on mechanical and electrical aids. Both of these have been used to advantage by the research worker in extending our knowledge of cardiac sounds.

During recent years rapid strides have been made following the perfection of amplification systems. Electrical stethoscopes have been introduced for teaching purposes and frequency filters have been improved suf-

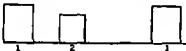
ficiently to eliminate a variety of background noises. Today it is possible to pick up the heart sounds in a microphone applied over the cardiac area,

↑ Longitudinal axis = Loudness.
 → Transverse axis = Duration.

1 cm = 0.20 Second.

~~~~~ = Low pitched, coarse or rumbling murmur.

||||| = High pitched, blowing or whiffy murmur.

 Normal heart sounds = 1 cycle.

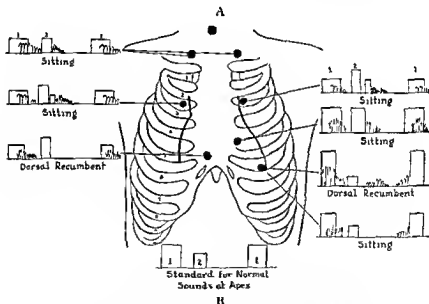


FIG. 7. A. Code of symbols and rules for the graphic description of cardiac sounds and murmurs. Redrawn from Segall.\*

B. The application of the graphic method. Reproduction of the record of the signs recorded in a patient with aortic stenosis and insufficiency and mitral stenosis and insufficiency. Redrawn from Segall.\*

transmit them some distance from the patient, and reproduce them on a loud speaker.

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**Recording Heart Sounds.** Instruments that enable the physician to record the heart sounds are now on the market. The sounds of the heart are converted into electrical pulsations by a microphone of special design. These pulsations amplified many times are led into the moving coil of a reflecting galvanometer and result in oscillations of a beam of light which is projected on a strip of film moving at a constant speed. Part of the light beam is deflected on a ground-glass scale, enabling its excursions to be observed while recording. Provision is also made for listening to the sounds through an electrical stethoscope (amplified auscultation).

The heart sounds may be recorded separately (stethogram) or may be recorded with the electrocardiogram (see Fig. 173). If murmurs are present, these will be shown by a roughening of the base line which occurs between the first and second sounds if the murmur is in systole and following the second sound if it is in diastole. The patterns of these deflections may indicate the character of the murmur. A murmur of high pitch, for example, will be recorded by many fine, sharp-pointed deflections, while a murmur of low pitch will be represented by fewer, less sharply pointed and more widely separated deflections. Thrills, crescendo murmurs and other sounds that may be present also appear in the graph.

The results of the recording of murmurs by this apparatus have not been as satisfactory as the recording of heart sounds. Many difficulties are encountered by the uninitiated that make the method one of doubtful value when used outside the laboratory under varying conditions. The analysis of the records is especially difficult when vibrations other than the murmurs are encountered and recorded. Considering the rapid strides made in the perfection of this instrument, however, the elimination of the remaining technical difficulties seems possible in the very near future.

Split sounds, on the other hand, may be more accurately analyzed in some cases by the stethogram than by auscultation alone. At times the stethogram will aid the clinician in differentiating between a third heart sound and a diastolic murmur. Instead of the electrocardiogram, the jugular pulse may be recorded simultaneously with the heart sounds in these records. This is very useful in recognizing the difficult diastolic phases.

**CAUTIONS IN AMPLIFICATION AND RECORDING.** The physician in the field, who is not in constant contact with research workers who have had experience in heart-sound recording, should be cautious in the purchase of this new sound equipment and in the interpretation of the records obtained. Likewise, if the modern practitioner tries to acquire a knowledge of the technic of all the newer laboratory methods, he will find that he has little time left to maintain or increase his skill in the older methods of physical diagnosis. After all, the machinery of modern medicine is only an aid to our special senses and can never entirely replace them at the bedside. We learn the nature of certain puzzling signs through the use of specialized instruments; and if we are alert, profit by this experience. Consequently the more often we use them, the better equipped we become to arrive at correct diagnoses unaided.

Careful attention should be paid to the lungs in the examination of every cardiac patient. Râles may appear at the bases in beginning congestive failure. Pulmonary congestion, on the other hand, may occur suddenly and be accompanied by cough, frothy, blood-tinged sputum, dyspnea, and cyanosis. Numerous fine râles may be heard all over the chest, and these may quickly develop into coarse bubbling râles if fluid continues to be poured out into the pulmonary alveoli.

Infarction of the lung following occlusion of the branches of the pulmonary artery by an embolus or thrombus often complicates heart disease. When the infarct is small, no signs or symptoms appear; where a larger area is involved, signs are present, depending on the location and size of the vessel that is occluded. If the lesion is near the outer lung margin in contact with the chest, an impaired percussion note may be demonstrated and a friction rub may be heard over the same area. In these cases a few localized râles can usually be detected, and the patient may complain of pain at this site. A cough productive of bloody sputum and an increase in the dyspnea may direct the attention of the physician to the lung fields. Many times, however, pulmonary embolism and thrombosis are unsuspected and consequently undetected until revealed at necropsy. In the course of congestive failure, hydrothorax is not uncommon. It is usually right-sided, owing to the greater likelihood of obstruction of the right azygous vein. Careful examination of the back of the chest of every cardiac patient, particularly those showing an increase in dyspnea, is important so that large pleural collections will not be missed.

In the examination of the abdomen of the cardiac patient, the upper right quadrant is first carefully palpated for hepatic enlargement. Pain in this area may be the presenting complaint, for sudden distention of the liver capsule by congestion causes marked discomfort whereas if the increase in the back pressure is gradual, no symptoms may appear. Pulsation of the liver accompanies tricuspid regurgitation and is rare. Accumulation of fluid in the abdomen occurs in congestive failure (see Fig. 2). Ascites may be present early in cases of chronic constrictive pericarditis, particularly in children (page 181). The spleen is enlarged in subacute bacterial endocarditis and is a valuable finding to add to the record where a differential diagnosis is sought between this disease and a recurrence of rheumatic infection. Abdominal pulsations are common, especially in women, but the diagnosis of abdominal aortic aneurysm requires the palpation of a definite mass showing expansile pulsation (page 485).

Examination of the extremities will furnish valuable data. Pulse differences should always be searched for. Clubbing of the fingers and toes may occur in subacute bacterial endocarditis. When associated with cyanosis, clubbing usually points to a diagnosis of congenital heart disease (see Fig. 124). The elbows, ankles, wrists, and knees should be carefully inspected for evidence of rheumatic nodules (see Fig. 54). The appearance of these small subcutaneous nodes often aids in the diagnosis of the rheumatic state. All reflexes should be tested. Signs pointing to a syphilitic

infection of the nervous system may throw light on the nature of an aortic lesion when the etiology is in doubt. The legs should be carefully inspected for the presence of edema.

## ROENTGEN METHODS IN DIAGNOSIS

While a careful history and physical examination, followed by the correct evaluation of all symptoms and signs elicited, should enable the physician to manage properly and efficiently the majority of cardiac patients, whenever possible at the end of the clinical examination, when diagnostic impressions have been recorded, a roentgen study should be made.<sup>320</sup> This extends the power of inspection a little deeper and comprises the last part of the physical examination of the cardiac patient. It may only confirm the diagnosis. However, in doubtful cases, especially where the difficulties of physical examination have been increased by such conditions as obesity, emphysema, or pregnancy, the roentgen examination furnishes additional information of great value.

Before any drawings of the heart outline (orthodiagrams) or roentgen films of the chest (roentgenograms) are made, a great deal of information concerning the heart and great vessels can be obtained by fluoroscopy. The size and shape of the heart can be seen at a glance. By turning the patient in various positions, all the cardiac chambers may be studied and their pulsations noted. The pulmonary fields are open to inspection, and engorgement can be detected, while the size, density, and course of the aorta can be determined. Today all of this data is added to the patient's record by the clinician who has invaded the field of the roentgenologist to the extent of making his own fluoroscopic examinations and orthodiagrams. It is therefore possible for the entire cardiac study to be completed before the patient leaves the office.

Some clinicians still prefer to take roentgenograms with the patient in various positions and to study these later for abnormalities of cardiac size and shape. To be satisfactory for this purpose, roentgen films must be taken with the tube at a distance of at least seven feet from the patient's chest. In this way only parallel rays from the tube are used and distortion of the cardiac silhouette is avoided (Fig. 8). The nearer the tube is moved to the patient, the greater will be the distortion of the cardiac shadow. At a distance of seven feet or more, the rays from the tube are practically parallel, but an exact reproduction of the heart size on the film is not obtained. The percentage of error, however, is negligible, and the method is suited for clinical purposes.<sup>317</sup>

The orthodiagram, on the other hand, has many advantages. To begin with, it is much less expensive. The equipment necessary consists of a fluoroscope properly fitted with a few special attachments for making orthodiagrams (Fig. 9) and the supplies (parchment tracing paper, planimeter, copying pencils, and slide rule) for making and calculating the orthodiagrams.<sup>197</sup> True cardiac size is obtained, for here the tube is moved by

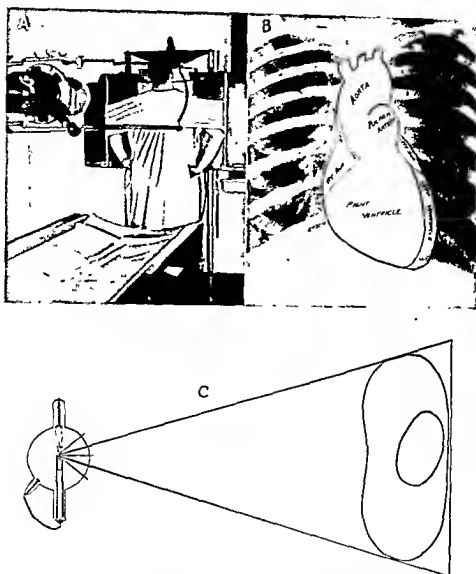


FIG. 8 The teleroentgenographic method.

A The patient in position with the tube at a distance of seven feet.

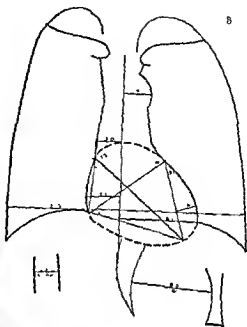
B. The roentgen film The various cardiac chambers are indicated on the silhouette.

C. Diagram illustrating course of divergent rays It can be seen that the smaller the distance between the tube and the patient the greater will be the distortion on the screen.

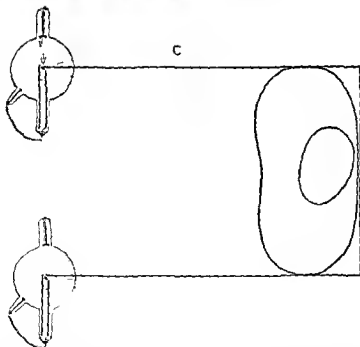
Advantages of method 1—A standard procedure that can be carried out by a technician. 2—This result is more accurate if the orthodiagraphic measurements are made by an inexperienced observer.



A



B



C

FIG. 9. The orthodiagraphic method. A. Fluoroscope with orthodiagraphic attachment. (Courtesy Westinghouse X-Ray Corporation.) B. The orthodiagram. C. Diagram illustrating the principle of projection. Parallel rays are obtained by moving the tube and no distortion of the image results.

the operator and a small beam of parallel rays, controlled by a shutter, is used to illuminate the cardiac border. Experience reduces the incidence of technical errors. Finally, it is desirable that the clinician who makes the physical examination should also carry out the roentgen study. In this way he can check his findings at once and in addition to determining accurately cardiac size, he sees the heart contour in the various positions and can closely study cardiac contractions. Valuable data not obtainable at the initial examination may be furnished by a series of studies made on the same patient by the same observer at intervals (see Fig. 24).

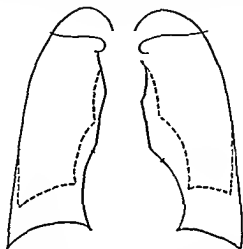


FIG. 10. Diagram illustrating the effect of respiration on cardiac position. The solid line represents inspiration. The broken line represents the position of the heart in expiration.

A number of factors influence the size and shape of the normal cardiac silhouette observed during fluoroscopic examination. If the respiratory movements are forced, distortion of the shadow will result. With deep inspiration the heart becomes long and narrow; with deep expiration, short and broad (Fig. 10). The patient should, therefore, be instructed to breathe normally and slowly. In recumbency, increase in the return volume of blood entering the heart will slightly widen the shadow, while in the erect position a decrease in the return flow is apt to give a slightly smaller silhouette. If the standing position is used, all subsequent observations made for purposes of comparison should be carried out in this position.

Fluoroscopy may be increased in value if the patient swallows barium paste during the examination. This outlines the esophagus and enables its relationship to heart and aorta to be determined (Fig. 11).

In every fluoroscopic examination of the heart, the patient should be studied in four standard positions:

**Anteroposterior Position.** In this view the heart appears as a dense shadow in the middle of the chest with the apex directed toward the left.





A. Displacement of the esophagus by enlargement of the left auricle. Patient in the right oblique position.

B. Kreuzfuchs' method for determination of the aortic diameter. Patient in antero-posterior position (See text).



C. Right sided aorta. Patient in the right oblique position. (Courtesy of Dr. E. P. Pendergrass.)

FIG. 11. The value of the barium-filled esophagus in roentgen examinations of the heart and great vessels.

Wide variations in cardiac shape may be seen to occur normally, and these will depend upon the body build. For example, if the diaphragm is high, as in individuals of hypersthenic habitus, the heart will be elevated and will appear wider (Fig. 12A), while in the hyposthenic type, the diaphragm is low, and the heart assumes a central vertical position (Fig. 12B).

In the anteroposterior position, the upper curve of the right border (Fig. 13) follows closely the right sternal margin and is formed by the great vessels; in younger patients the superior vena cava usually occupies

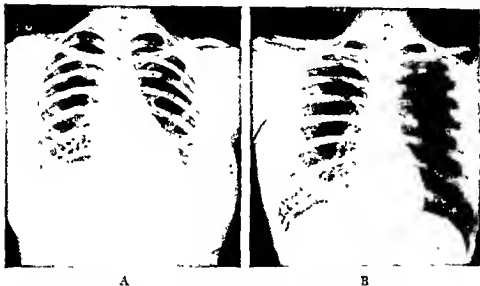


FIG. 12. Influence of bodily conformation on the cardiac position and shape.  
A. The hypersthenic type. The diaphragm is high.  
B. Hyposthenic type. The diaphragm is low (ptotic or drop heart).

this position, but in older patients, the aorta is seen. In the latter instance an arterial type of pulsation is noted in the convex shadow of this region. The lower half of the right border, curving outward and downward to the cardiophrenic angle is formed by the right auricle. Rarely the inferior vena cava and cardiodiaphragmatic ligament become visible below the auricle.

Viewing the cardiac silhouette in the anteroposterior position from above downward on the left side, the first structure that attracts attention is the aortic knob forming a short curve, convex to the left. In older patients this may be quite prominent. The next small arc seen on the left border varies in its prominence in different patients and is formed by the pulmonary artery. It exhibits a lesser degree of arterial pulsation than is usually seen in the aortic area. The pulmonary area may be quite convex and prominent in children and young adults, but this decreases with advancing years. A small portion of the left auricular appendage can usually be seen on the left border inferior to the pulmonary artery. Enlargement or

bulging in this region has considerable significance in rheumatic heart disease when mitral stenosis and left auricular enlargement are present. The left ventricle constitutes the remainder of the left border, amounting to nearly one-half of the total length. It is usually slightly convex outward and

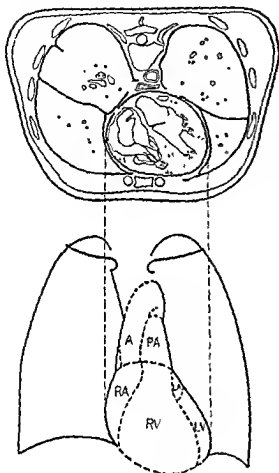


FIG. 13

FIG. 13. Schematic diagram illustrating topography of the heart and great vessels with the patient in the anteroposterior position.

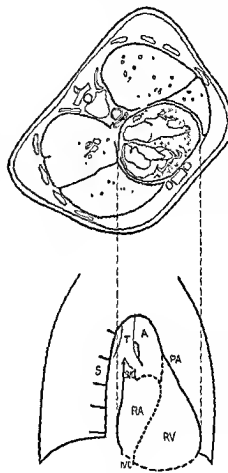


FIG. 14

FIG. 14. The topography of the heart with the patient in the right oblique position.

curves sharply around the apex of the heart. At times an air bubble in the stomach may permit visualization of the inferior cardiac border (see Fig. 103), but nearly always this part of the outline is lost in the subdiaphragmatic shadows. The inferior cardiac border is composed of the left ventricle for a small distance in the region of the apex. The right ventricle makes up nearly one-half of the remaining distance to the sternum, while the right auricle completes the inferior border.

**Right Anterior Oblique Position.** The examination is continued with the patient in the right anterior oblique position (sometimes called the first oblique or right oblique position). Here the right shoulder remains in touch with the screen while the body is rotated through an angle of approxi-

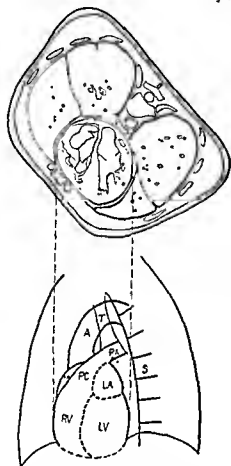


FIG. 15

FIG. 15. Diagram illustrating the topography of the heart and great vessels with the patient in the left anterior oblique position.

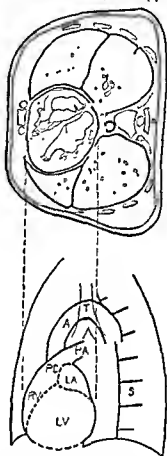


FIG. 16

FIG. 16. Diagram illustrating the topography of the heart and great vessels with the patient in the lateral position.

mately 40 degrees (Fig. 14). Standard degrees of rotation are unsatisfactory. It is best to turn the patient slowly until the cardiac silhouette, as shown in the figure, is seen to its fullest extent. The right or posterior border of the shadow is now composed of the superior vena cava, the right auricle, and the inferior vena cava. The anterior border is made up of the ascending aorta, the pulmonary artery, and the right ventricle. The right anterior oblique position is most important where early mitral stenosis is suspected. The cardiac silhouette in this position will then be altered by the encroachment of the left auricle on the retrocardiac space (see Fig. 11).

**Left Anterior Oblique Position.** In the left anterior oblique or the second oblique position, the patient's left shoulder remains in contact with the screen and he is rotated to the right about 40 degrees. This position is particularly suitable for visualization of the aorta. The ascending portion can be clearly seen, the transverse portion less distinctly, while the descending portion may be followed until it merges with the vertebral column shadow. The anterior border of the heart in this position (Fig. 15) is formed by the aorta, the right auricle, and the right ventricle. The trachea may be seen at its bifurcation between the ascending aorta and the spinal column. This air-containing structure tends to obscure the transverse aortic arch. It is important to note that in the left anterior oblique position, all the chambers of the heart can be visualized.

**Lateral Position.** For this view, the patient stands at right angles to the screen with the left shoulder forward and both hands behind the head. Here the anterior border of the heart (Fig. 16) is made up of the aorta and the right ventricle, while posteriorly, beginning below the arch, the border is made up of the pulmonary artery, the left auricle, the left ventricle, and at times, a portion of the inferior vena cava. The area between the back of the heart and the vertebral column, again visualized clearly in this position, is the retrocardiac space. It is usually clear and normally averages about 2 to 3 cm. in width unless the anteroposterior diameter of the chest is small, in which event it may be proportionately narrowed or entirely obliterated. A careful study of the retrocardiac space with the patient in the oblique position is most essential since both left atrium and left ventricle are posterior chambers and their enlargement may be detected by encroachments upon this area.

#### CARDIAC SIZE

Cardiac hypertrophy, except in a few rare instances, means heart disease; consequently, it is of primary importance to determine the size of the heart. While percussion may furnish this evidence, roentgen studies are valuable in checking the result and in pointing out the degree of participation of the various cardiac chambers in the enlargement. A number of methods for measuring and recording the heart size are in use. Of course, the first impression as to the presence or absence of cardiac enlargement is gained at the time of the fluoroscopic examination. The relationship between the size of the heart and the diameter of the chest is first noted. Later this cardiothoracic ratio may be calculated from the roentgen film or orthodiagram. To obtain this figure from the orthodiagram, drop a perpendicular line of the chest, starting midway between the sternoclavicular joints (Fig. 17). At right angles to this line, draw the transverse diameter of the chest, tangent to the dome of the right diaphragm. The transverse diameter of the heart is obtained by adding RM (greatest extension of the heart to the right) and LM (greatest extension of the heart to the left). If this figure is divided by the transverse diameter of the chest, the result will be the cardiothoracic ratio. The normal value is 0.5, but values in



recommended by different workers as a guide to the enlargement of the individual chambers of the heart. It is necessary to place certain markings on the cardiac border during the fluoroscopic examination before these diagonals can be drawn (Fig. 17). The point (A) on the right cardiac border designates the junction of the superior vena cava and the right auricle, (B) the right cardiophrenic angle, (C) on the left border marks the junction of the auricular appendage and the ventricle. Incidentally, point (C) is not always easy to locate. It requires close inspection along the left border during the fluoroscopic study to discern the dividing point or fulcrum where the type of pulsations changes.

When these points are marked, the orthodiagram is traced from the screen on parchment paper and placed on a drawing board. B and C are connected. A ruler is placed parallel to the line BC and tangent to the lower end of the cardiac border. The point where the border touches the ruler is marked D. This approximates the cardiac apex. The following lines are now drawn: AB, this is the chord of the right auricle; AD, this is the long diameter of the heart. A perpendicular line from PP' to C(SC) represents the left auricle. Other perpendicular lines are drawn from the midline of the chest to the most distant points on each cardiac border (RM and LM). Next connect the points C and D. This distance is known as the chord of the left ventricle. Now connect B and D. This is the chord of the right ventricle. A perpendicular from the line CD to the outermost part of the left ventricle is now drawn and marked N. This represents the rise of the left ventricle. A similar perpendicular from AB to the right auricular border is drawn and marked O. This represents the rise of the right auricle. To measure the width of the great vessels in the supracardiac shadow, perpendicular lines are drawn from the midline of the chest to points of farthest extension to the right (1) and to the left (2). The sum of these should not exceed 7.5 cm., but the value will vary depending on age, build, and amount of tortuosity of the aorta.

The aorta may usually be measured in the right and left anterior oblique positions, at which time the diameter may be marked on the screen with the patient rotated to the angle giving the greatest visibility and using the smallest possible pencil of parallel rays from the tube. In the anteroposterior position, the aortic diameter at the beginning of the descending portion may be obtained by using the procedure recommended by Kreuzfuchs. This method is based on the anatomic fact that the right side of the descending aorta in the region of the aortic knob parallels the left side of the esophagus. As the patient swallows barium paste, the left side of the barium column and the left border of the aorta are marked on the screen (Fig. 11). From this measurement 3 mm., representing the width of the esophageal wall, is deducted.

#### CHARACTERISTIC ORTHODIAGNOSTIC CHANGES

Certain types of heart disease, especially those associated with valvular lesions, alter the orthodiagram in a characteristic manner. In mitral regurgitation there may occasionally be noted an outward pulsation in the region

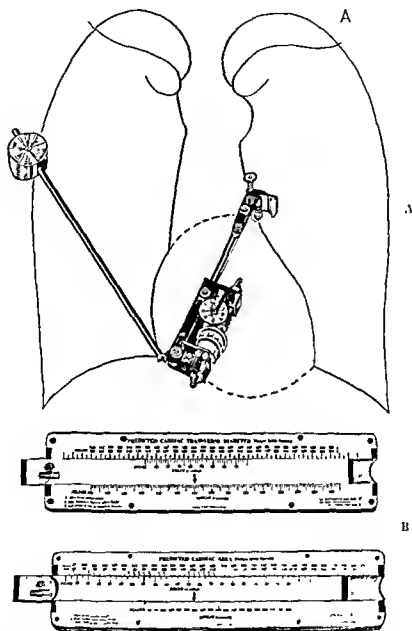


FIG 18. A. Calculation of the cardiac area by the use of the planimeter. B The cardiac slide rule.\*

\* Manufactured by the Picker X-Ray Corporation, 300 Fourth Ave., N. Y.



of the left auricle, on the left cardiac border occurring during cardiac systole. The orthodiagram will show enlargement to the left and downward of the left ventricle (Fig. 19).

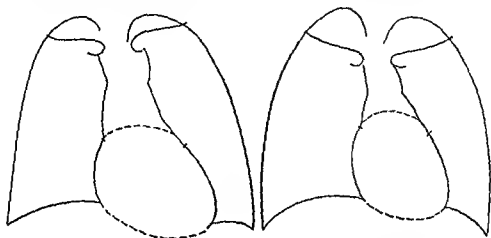


FIG. 19. Mitral regurgitation.

FIG. 20 Mitral stenosis.

**Mitralization.** In mitral stenosis, the cardiac silhouette shows characteristic alterations. The thin-walled left auricle, responding to the strain, enlarges, and the region occupied by this structure on the left cardiac border becomes more conspicuous. At the same time, increased pressure in the pul-

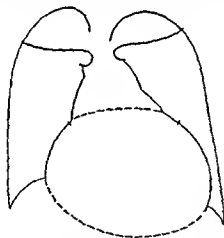


FIG. 21. Advanced mitral stenosis and regurgitation.

monary circuit causes bulging of the region occupied by the pulmonary artery just above the auricular segment. The result (Fig. 20) is a straightening of the whole left border of the heart. This is spoken of as mitralization. The effect is further accentuated by a decrease in the size of the aortic knob.

Progress in the mitral lesion tends to reduce the amount of blood entering the left ventricle; consequently, this chamber does not increase in size—



FIG. 22 Advanced mitral stenosis. Note the bulge on the right cardiac border caused by the dilatation of the left auricle.

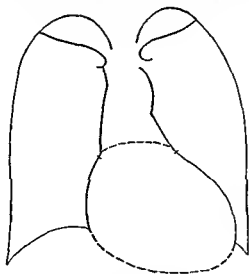


FIG. 23. Aortic regurgitation.

in some cases even becomes smaller. Since both left auricle and left ventricle occupy posterior positions, early changes may be detected by turning the patient and noting encroachments on the retrocardiac space in either

the right oblique or lateral views (Fig. 11). The enlargement of the left auricle in mitral stenosis may be seen in the upper and middle thirds of the retrocardiac space. When there is an accompanying mitral regurgitation with left ventricular enlargement, the lower third of the retrocardiac space is likewise narrowed by the increase in size of the left ventricle. In

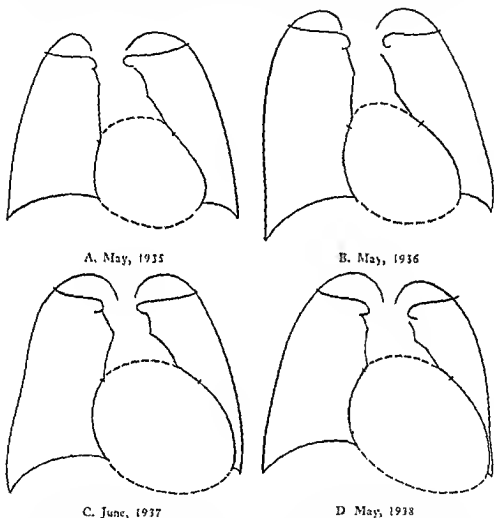


FIG. 24. Serial orthodiagrams from a case of rheumatic heart disease with regurgitation and stenosis at mitral and aortic valves. Note progressive increase in cardiac size over a period of four years.

advanced cases with generalized cardiac hypertrophy, the entire retrocardiac space may be obliterated.

A greater degree of mitral stenosis and regurgitation causes the heart to assume a triangular shape (Fig. 21). This is caused by the combined effect of the two lesions. The whole of the left border shows mitralization, but in addition there is enlargement of the heart to both right and left.

At times in advanced mitral stenosis, the left auricle may become so large that it may be seen extending beyond the right cardiac border (Fig. 22).

Aortic regurgitation produces left ventricular enlargement (Fig. 23). Other conditions such as aortic stenosis and hypertension place a strain on the left ventricle and are accompanied by similar alterations in the cardiac silhouette. The aortic knob becomes more prominent, and the pulsations in aortic regurgitation will be seen to have an increased excursion. In addition to these changes, in patients with syphilitic aortitis and aortic regurgitation, the aorta may show considerable increase in density. If the



FIG 25 Large pericardial effusion.

patient is viewed in the left lateral position, the increased size of the ventricle will be indicated by the degree of encroachment on the retrocardiac space. In this position, the left ventricle occupies the lower two-thirds of the posterior border, consequently slight variations in its size may be detected.

Combined aortic and mitral lesions alter the cardiac silhouette in proportion to their relative severity. Usually all chambers are enlarged (Fig. 24). The left ventricular size is always increased and rotation of the patient to the right oblique position shows a marked degree of obliteration of the retrocardiac space by the dilated left auricle.

Lesions of the tricuspid valve are rare. The clinical diagnosis of tricuspid regurgitation is difficult, but fluoroscopically it may be suspected when an unusual degree of pulsation coinciding with ventricular systole is noted along the right auricular border, accompanied by pulsation of the superior vena cava. Stenosis of the tricuspid valve, another rare lesion, will

produce right auricular enlargement with some dilatation in the region of the superior vena cava.

Large effusions into the pericardial sac produce a typical alteration of the configuration (Fig. 25). This is known as the "leather water-bottle" shape. Smaller effusions may be seen in the dependent position of the sac with the patient in the upright position. Alterations should be searched for just above the diaphragm where the angle between the liver and the pericardium may become acute. In pericarditis with effusion close inspection of the borders of the cardiac silhouette will show decreased pulsations. As the fluid accumulates further, the pulsations may entirely disappear and the usual cardiac outline may be obliterated. Care should be taken not to



FIG. 26. Calcium deposits in the aortic valve. (Marked by arrow.) This patient was a male of 56 who gave a history of several attacks of acute rheumatic infection in childhood. A. Right anterior oblique position. B. Left anterior oblique position

mistake the dilated heart with feeble pulsations for this picture of pericardial effusion. When in doubt, roentgen films taken both in the upright and recumbent positions may be helpful. In recumbency, it will be noted that the heart becomes globular in shape owing to a more even distribution of the fluid contained within the pericardial sac.

Chronic pericarditis should be suspected when the cardiac silhouette is smaller than one would expect to encounter considering the severity of the clinical signs (see Fig. 82). In this type of heart a diminution in the pulsation is likewise a characteristic feature.

Roentgen films, particularly the lateral and oblique views, may show calcium deposits, and these will be of great assistance in the diagnosis

(Fig. 26). Fixation may be demonstrated in chronic mediastinopericarditis by taking roentgenograms in various positions and noting the shift of the cardiac border.

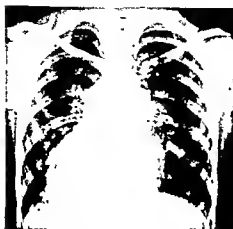


FIG. 27

FIG. 27. Congenital dextrocardia. This patient was a child of 10 who presented in addition the typical signs of an established mitral stenosis. Note the cardiac enlargement and mitralization.

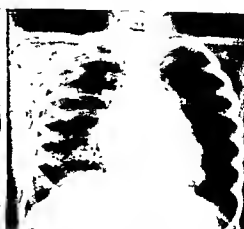


FIG. 28

FIG. 28. Patent ductus arteriosus

Congenital cardiac defects occur in a variety of combinations. A careful analysis of the contour of the orthodiagram and a consideration of the findings on physical examination will often enable the physician to diagnose correctly the type of congenital abnormality present. True congenital dex-



FIG. 29. Pulmonary stenosis. (Coeur en sabot.)

trocardia (Fig. 27) presents no difficulty. Patent ductus arteriosus in some cases may cause no alteration in the cardiac silhouette. If the lumen of the communication is large, cardiac size will be increased (Fig. 28), and a

prominence will be noted in the region of the pulmonary artery with increased pulsations over this area. In stenosis of the pulmonary valve, increase in the size of the right ventricle is common. This tends to elevate the apex of the left ventricle, producing a cardiac configuration resembling

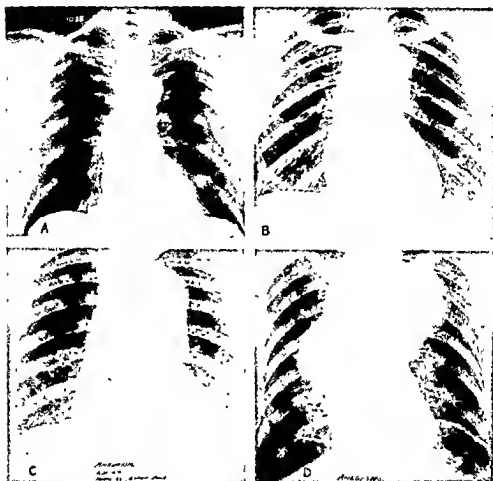


FIG. 30. Syphilitic cardiovascular disease.

- A. Early syphilitic aortitis. Note the enlargement of the ascending aorta.
- B. Dilated ascending aorta (early aneurysm).
- C. Aneurysm of the entire aortic arch.
- D. Saccular aneurysms.

a wooden shoe, the so-called "coeur en sabot" (Figs. 29 and 136). In coarctation of the aorta, the ascending aorta may be dilated, and increased pulsations will be observed. The congenital band constricting the aorta increases the work of the left ventricle and hypertrophy of this chamber may result. The intercostal arteries, serving as collateral pathways in these cases, may erode the lower borders of the ribs. This change can

usually be demonstrated only by means of a satisfactory roentgen film (see Fig. 128).

Measurements of the aorta are occasionally of importance to the clinician in diagnosis. In syphilitic aortitis, the early changes can be detected only by roentgen examination. Experience in the fluoroscopic method increases the ability of the clinician to recognize these differences in aortic density. In syphilitic aortitis, the aorta may appear on the right cardiac border or the aortic knob may be prominent and the changes in the aortic wall may produce a wider range of pulsations. Portions of the aortic wall may weaken early in the process and local bulgings may be seen fluoroscopically long before they can be recognized clinically. The aorta should be studied care-

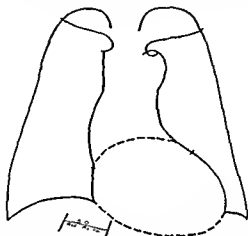


FIG. 31. Orthodiagram of a patient suffering from syphilitic cardiovascular disease. Aortic regurgitation was present. Note aortic dilatation and cardiac enlargement. The aortic measurement recorded below was made with the patient in the right anterior oblique position.

fully in all positions in suspected cases. The most common site for aortic aneurysm is in the ascending arch near the base of the heart (Figs. 30 and 31). These aneurysms are usually associated with aortic regurgitation and left ventricular enlargement. Where the aortic valves are not affected by the syphilitic process and where the mouths of the coronary arteries escape, even large aneurysms may not cause any change in the cardiac size or shape. Aneurysms of the transverse arch of the aorta (Fig. 32C), by pressure on neighboring structures, may cause cough, hoarseness, or dysphagia. Indentation or displacement of the barium-filled esophagus by the dilated transverse arch may be readily demonstrated. Serial orthodiagrams are useful in following changes in the aorta during treatment.

In hypertension the aorta becomes prominent, assumes a position on the right cardiac border where increased pulsations can be noted synchronous with ventricular systole. At the same time, cardiac hypertrophy





is seen (Fig. 33). In the presence of advancing sclerosis of the aorta, areas of density corresponding to calcified areas may be detected (Fig. 34).

It must be kept in mind at all times that serious heart disease may be present with no alterations in the size or shape of the cardiac silhouette. This is true in some cases where coronary sclerosis exists as the single lesion, although following occlusion, enlargement is quite apt to develop. In fluoroscopy all cases that give a history of previous coronary occlusion, a close watch should be kept for unusual bulgings in the cardiac outline suggestive of cardiac aneurysms (Figs. 35 and 110).



FIG. 34. Arteriosclerotic aortitis with calcification.

Study of the heart action as a whole during fluoroscopy gives valuable information. Auricular contractions precede the ventricular by 0.10 to 0.20 second, but this difference can seldom be appreciated by inspection of the silhouette. However, in cases of heart block, auricular contractions may be clearly seen to precede the ventricular contractions. The aorta and pulmonary artery are prominent during cardiac systole and stand out distinctly on the left cardiac border. Exaggeration of this movement is seen in some pathologic conditions such as aortic regurgitation and hypertension. The whole heart may be seen to have increased excursions in patients suffering from hyperthyroidism. However, it is important for the beginner to remember that THE CHARACTER AND THE EXTENT OF THE CARDIAC PULSATIONS OBSERVED FLUOROSCOPICALLY SHOULD NEVER BE TAKEN AS AN INDEX OF CARDIAC FUNCTION. Weak contractions are encountered in patients suffering from myocardial insufficiency but may also be seen in normal patients who are obese and have high diaphragms with so-called transverse hearts.

In addition to the roentgen film or teleroentgenogram and the ortho-

diagram, another method of study has recently been perfected. By means of a grid that moves at a definite rate as exposures are made, shadows are obtained that reveal the maximum and minimum excursions of the cardiac borders. This is known as a kymogram. It requires specialized technical

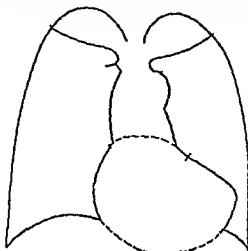


FIG. 35. Cardiac aneurysm.

methods and is generally employed by those possessing special roentgenologic training.

## ELECTROCARDIOGRAPHY

The electrocardiograph is an outstanding example of the usefulness of the laboratory in clinical medicine. Invented and perfected by the combined efforts of many laboratory workers over the course of half a century, it has proved worthy of the high place it holds in medical practice, and every physician should possess a knowledge of at least the fundamental principles of the method.

The electrocardiogram should always be interpreted in the light of the clinical findings. The physical methods of diagnosis properly applied usually yield more abundant evidence than the electrocardiograph; for just as the physical examination may be negative in some cases of advanced coronary disease, or the neurologic signs produced by some brain tumors insignificant, so the electrocardiogram may be negative in the presence of such serious conditions as angina pectoris or subacute bacterial endocarditis. The graphic method of electrocardiography, after all, only shows the origin and distribution of the impulse for cardiac contraction. It locates accurately an abnormal origin of the impulse and detects the site of any disease process that interferes with its spread, but it gives no clue as to the nature of the disease.

**Arrhythmias.** A knowledge of the cardiac arrhythmias can be very

quickly gained by a study of the alterations they produce in the electrocardiogram. In fact, introducing a greater accuracy of diagnosis into the field of the irregularities was an initial task successfully and quickly completed by those working with the electrocardiograph. The physician was soon able, through the knowledge gained from the study of the electrocardiogram, to diagnose unaided nearly all the cardiac irregularities. In some instances, the instrumental method must still be called upon to render the final opinion. For example, if a sinus arrhythmia, a benign condition in itself, is accompanied by frequently recurring premature beats or extrasystoles, the differentiation from auricular fibrillation may be difficult. If premature beats alone are observed and diagnosed clinically, it is still desirable to have an electrocardiogram; then their point or points of origin may be determined with accuracy. If they arise from more than one focus, this fact will be shown by the tracing, in which event, the extrasystoles are more apt to accompany organic myocardial disease. Furthermore, any additional changes that may be encountered in the electrocardiogram may shed more light on the diagnosis.

**Infection.** When cardiac infection is suspected, the electrocardiogram is invaluable. In some cases it will furnish the only positive evidence upon which a diagnosis of acute myocarditis can be based. For example, if an inflammatory process involves the conduction system of the heart, delay in the transmission of the contraction impulse may occur. At times the impulse may be completely blocked, but usually the changes produced in the tracing are slight and transient. If these are detected in the absence of cardiac enlargement or other decisive clinical signs, the electrocardiogram becomes a valuable aid in establishing the diagnosis and instituting proper therapy.

**Paroxysmal rapid heart rates** are often puzzling. Although the physician, unaided, can usually make the correct diagnosis at the bedside, the electrocardiogram can be a great help at times. For example, in paroxysmal tachycardia, the electrocardiogram shows whether the paroxysm is of auricular or ventricular origin. The ventricular variety is much more serious from the standpoint of prognosis and is more apt to be associated with heart disease. The early recognition of the presence of ventricular tachycardia may serve as a warning, for it often precedes the onset of ventricular fibrillation. The electrocardiogram is also useful in the diagnosis of auricular flutter, particularly where high degrees of block are present, making an accurate clinical diagnosis difficult.

**Essential Hypertension.** In the course of essential hypertension, evidence of cardiac changes should always be sought in the electrocardiogram. If myocardial damage is suggested, the regime of treatment should be altered accordingly to lessen the strain on the cardiac reserve.

In angina pectoris a positive electrocardiogram may be valuable when this diagnosis is in doubt, although many times the tracing in angina is negative. Electrocardiograms taken during an attack of anginal pain,

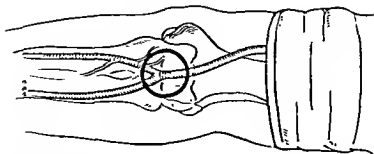
following exercise, or induced anoxemia may show slight alterations in the form of a graph that was previously normal and furnish the necessary objective evidence.

**Drug Effects.** Drugs alter the appearance of the electrocardiogram. As we would expect, digitalis produces the most marked and characteristic change, and the action of increasing doses is reflected in the rate, rhythm and form of the individual waves. Consequently, the electrocardiogram is very valuable in giving warning of approaching toxic symptoms that not infrequently occur during the administration of this drug. When quinidine is indicated in an attempt to restore normal rhythm in cases of auricular fibrillation and flutter, its action can be carefully watched by frequently repeated electrocardiograms.

**Valvular Lesions.** Occasionally in puzzling cases where valvular lesions are present, the electrocardiogram may act as a final court of appeal. For example, when pulmonary stenosis is suspected, the diagnosis is much more likely to be correct if the tracing shows a right axis deviation. Aortic stenosis is characterized by a left axis deviation. The auricular changes that accompany mitral stenosis often place their mark on the P-waves of the electrocardiogram. It is readily seen that these various signs may become useful when the clinical signs are inconclusive.

**Myocardial Disease.** While the earlier field of usefulness of the electrocardiograph was the analysis and classification of the various arrhythmias, in recent years the detection of myocardial disease has been its most important function. In no other condition is the electrocardiogram as valuable as in coronary thrombosis. With the use of the new chest leads, the diagnosis of acute myocardial infarction can be made with certainty in over 90 per cent of the cases. Occlusion of one of the main coronary arteries or any of its branches produces characteristic changes in the form of the electrocardiogram many times when the remainder of the cardiac examination is entirely negative. The alterations that appear are transient, and the electrocardiographic picture may change from day to day; consequently frequent tracings are necessary in guiding the therapy in any case. In spite of the great service rendered by the electrocardiograph in this condition, it must be stated that the very small percentage of the cases giving the typical clinical history of coronary thrombosis in which the tracing is negative should always be treated on the basis of the clinical findings.

The conclusion can be drawn that the electrocardiographic tracing is a valuable supplement to the examination of every cardiac patient. It is an aid in the diagnosis of the arrhythmias, a guide to the administration of drugs and reaches its peak of usefulness, often when other methods of diagnosis fail, in the detection of coronary thrombosis. A full discussion of the fundamental principles of electrocardiography and a detailed study of the normal and abnormal electrocardiograms for the reader who is not familiar with the form of these curves will be found in Chapter 24.



A



B

FIG 36 Estimation of the arterial blood pressure by the auscultatory method.  
A. Position of the stethoscope in relation to the brachial artery.  
B. The apparatus and technic (Courtesy of the Taylor Instrument Company).

## SPHYGMOMANOMETRY

Most of the models of blood pressure instruments now on the market are satisfactory and are becoming sufficiently rugged in construction to stand the strain of long usage (Fig. 36B). Errors under five mm. in clinical models that receive ordinary care should not cause alarm. More often wide differences in readings are due to the technic used by the observers. Recently, the committee for the standardization of methods of taking blood pressure readings appointed by the American Heart Association and by the Cardiac Society of Great Britain and Ireland have published suggestions in an attempt to standardize the method of taking and recording the blood pressure readings.<sup>331</sup> These suggestions, summarized below, should be given careful consideration by every practicing physician:\*

1. The equipment should be kept in good condition and calibrated at yearly intervals.
2. The patient should be comfortably seated with the arm free of constriction and supported at heart level on a smooth surface. If the readings are taken in any other position, notation should be made.
3. A standard cuff with rubber bag 12 to 13 cm in width should be used. The rubber bag should be applied to the inner aspect of the arm one inch above the ante cubital space. Neither bulging nor displacement of the cuff should occur on inflation.
4. Palpation should always be used to check results. The pressure in the cuff should be quickly increased in steps of 10 mm. of mercury until the radial pulse ceases, and then allowed to fall rapidly. If the radial pulse is felt at a higher level than that at which the auscultatory sound is heard, the palpatory reading should be accepted as the systolic pressure; otherwise the auscultatory reading should be accepted.
5. In making auscultatory readings, the stethoscope should be placed over the previously palpated brachial artery in the ante cubital space (Fig. 36A), not in contact with the cuff. No opening should exist between the lip of the stethoscope and the skin; this should be accomplished with the minimum of pressure possible. The hand may be pronated or supinated according to the position yielding the clearest brachial pulse sounds.
6. To obtain systolic pressure, inflate to a pressure about 30 mm. above the level at which the radial pulse can be palpated. The cuff should then be deflated at a rate of from two to three mm. of mercury per second. The level at which the first sound regularly appears should be considered the systolic pressure unless, as already described, the palpatory level is higher, in which event, the palpatory level should be accepted. This should be noted.
7. With continued deflation of the cuff, the point at which the sounds suddenly become dull and muffled should be known as the diastolic pressure. If there is a difference between that point and the level at which the sounds completely disappear, the American Committee recommends that the latter reading should be regarded also as the diastolic pressure. This should be recorded in the following form. RT (or LT) 140/80-70 or 140/70-0. If these two levels are identical, the blood pressure should be recorded as follows: 140/70-70. The cuff should be completely deflated before a further determination is made. The British Committee believes that except in aortic regurgitation, it is nearly always possible to decide the point at which the change occurs and this is the only reading that should be recorded.

These specific recommendations should be carefully followed. Certain minor points likewise deserve consideration. Either mercurial or aneroid instruments are capable of

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tally as well as physically at ease. This procedure is most useful in experimental studies when an accurate standard level is desired. Objections to its use in ordinary practice are obvious.

At the time of the first examination of the patient, the blood pressure of both arms should be taken, since the two may be different. In the presence of unexplained high pressure in the brachial artery, blood pressure in the legs should be estimated, for in this manner conditions such as coarctation of the aorta may be detected.

Blood-pressure readings vary with age, but the often quoted rule that the blood pressure should be 100 plus the age gives values that are too high. A systolic pressure consistently above 150 mm. of mercury should be considered abnormal at any age. The systolic blood pressure readings of normal adults usually vary between 90 and 140 mm. of mercury.

The diastolic blood pressure is normally between 60 and 90 mm. of mercury. It can only be determined by the auscultatory method, is a much more important reading, and shows less variation than the systolic. When the diastolic reading of a patient is 120 or over on successive visits, the prognosis may be considered poor.

The pulse pressure is the difference between the systolic and diastolic pressures. It varies between 40 and 70 mm. of mercury. High values (70 to 120 mm.) are found in hypertension and aortic regurgitation. Low values occur in aortic stenosis, Addison's disease, shock, and chronic constrictive pericarditis or acute cardiac tamponade from any cause. When the pulse pressure varies from beat to beat, *pulsus alternans* may be the cause. This is a very important sign that generally points to a poor prognosis. However, during paroxysmal tachycardias, alternation of the pulse does not have the same significance. If alternation is observed when the pulse is slow, further clinical examination usually reveals other signs of advanced myocardial disease.

Blood pressure in females will average 10 mm. lower than in males of the same age and build. Since sleep causes a fall in the blood pressure, the morning readings may be lower than those taken in the evening. Respiration and change in position both influence blood pressure to a slight degree.

The blood pressure, as usually recorded, refers to the brachial artery pressure. Readings taken at other parts of the body will be found to vary with the size of the vessel and its position. Normally the pressure in the femoral artery is greater than the pressure in the brachial. The reverse is true in the presence of coarctation of the aorta. Changes in outside temperature may affect the blood pressure, and the reading may likewise show considerable variation when cold is locally applied. This fact has been made use of in the early detection of individuals predisposed to hypertension, who usually show an abnormal response in the blood pressure when an extremity is immersed in ice water for a minute (page 298).

The blood pressure may be estimated by the oscillometric method. The use of this instrument enables the physician to acquire additional informa-



tion in regard to the character of the arteries of the extremities. The oscilometer, a triangular metal box, is fitted with a special cuff containing two rubber bags. A dial with a movable needle records the oscillations of the blood vessel wall, while a small aneroid manometer registers the blood pressure level at which they appear and disappear. The number of spaces covered by the excursion of the needle is charted for each blood pressure level. This is known as the oscillometric index.

### VENOUS PRESSURE

Determination of the venous pressure is not a new procedure. Two hundred years ago Hales measured it by connecting a vein directly to a vertical glass manometer tube. The amount of attention that has been given to the question of venous pressure in the past decade and the various methods, both direct and indirect, that have been devised for its determination indicate a renewal of clinical interest in the subject. Venous pressure may be measured indirectly by determining the amount of air pressure necessary to collapse a superficial vein or directly by inserting into the vein a needle connected with a manometer. The direct method is simpler, more accurate, and less time-consuming.<sup>207</sup> A convenient apparatus (Fig. 37A) consists of (1) an 18-gauge needle, (2) a special adapter, (3) a 20-cc. syringe, and (4) an upright manometer tube with a 4 mm. bore graduated in centimeters. It can be readily assembled and the technic of its successful operation is not difficult to learn.

Before the venous-pressure determination is made, the patient should rest in recumbency on an examining table without a pillow for 15 minutes. During this time the apparatus may be sterilized in a shallow receptacle in 70 per cent alcohol. The patient's arm is prepared in the usual manner with iodine and alcohol and then supported until parallel to an imaginary line in the mid axilla, which is approximately the right auricular level. A cuff of a blood-pressure apparatus is next placed around the upper arm and inflated to 20 mm. of mercury to make the arm veins prominent. The apparatus is assembled with the needle on one end of the adapter and the syringe on the other. The stopcock of the adapter must be kept parallel to the needle (Fig. 37B). As the needle enters the vein, blood may be drawn into the syringe for the laboratory and the air allowed to escape from the cuff of the blood-pressure apparatus. The manometer tube is now fitted into the adapter perpendicular to the arm and the stopcock moved to a position where it is parallel to the manometer tube. Blood will at once start up the tube. When the column has ceased rising, the level on the tube is read. This is the venous pressure.

The venous pressure of normal individuals at rest in recumbency ranges between 4 and 12 mm. of water. Exercise causes an increased flow of blood to the heart, but in the absence of disease, the demand is almost immediately met, a greater discharge of blood into the arterial system takes place, and there is observed only a slight temporary rise in the pressure. If advanced heart disease is present, there is a high venous-

pressure reading after exercise, which, if sustained, is indicative of impending cardiac failure. Departure from the normal venous-pressure readings on slight exertion is seen only in cases where the cardiac involvement is obvious. Venous-pressure readings will not prove valuable in gauging myocardial capacity in patients in whom congestive failure is absent. In other words, these readings cannot be used as tests for physical fitness.

There is no relationship between venous pressure and arterial pressure

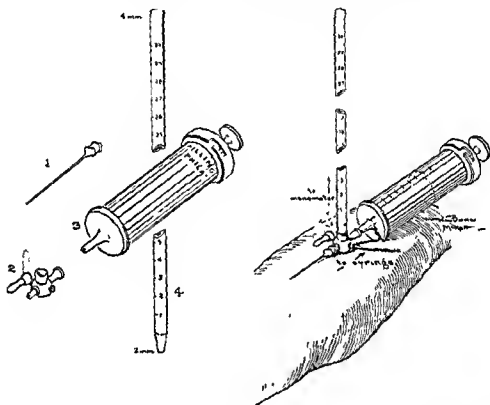


FIG. 37. Venous pressure apparatus.\* A The assembly. B Technic of venous pressure determination.

in the absence of congestive heart failure. The venous-pressure readings of 105 compensated cases of hypertension at the Philadelphia General Hospital were found to be within the normal range.<sup>207</sup>

Venous-pressure estimations are valuable in diagnosis, prognosis, and treatment of heart disease. The first sign of beginning congestive failure is elevation of the venous pressure or venous hypertension. In the differential diagnosis of allergic and the so-called "cardiac" asthma, the readings are helpful. In pneumonia cases, in which the physician is ever on the alert for signs of circulatory failure, venous-pressure readings are valuable, since they can detect an early overloading of the right heart.

\* Made by the George P. Pilling and Son Company, Philadelphia.

Single venous-pressure determinations, like single blood-pressure readings, are of little value. The venous-pressure trend, however, is significant. If the curve of the readings shows an increasing venous hypertension, this is evidence of the heart's inability to move the blood from the right to the left side, and it precedes edema, cardiac dilatation, and reduction of urinary secretion. If the venous-pressure values show a clear-cut upward trend, little hesitancy should be shown in resorting to venesection in order that the right heart may be at least temporarily relieved of part of its burden. Readings consistently over 21 mm. of water always indicate the need of venesection. After this procedure, the benefit may be reflected in the lowered values, and if sufficient myocardial reserve is present, the heart may respond to the decreased load and the circulation will be carried on with a greater degree of efficiency. If in spite of venesection, the signs of congestive failure advance and the curve of the venous-pressure readings is upward, the prognosis is usually poor. On the other hand, if the readings show a steadily downward trend, clinical improvement may be predicted. Under such circumstances, venous pressure is valuable in estimating the myocardial capacity of the patient.

An estimate of the venous pressure may be obtained in some cases by inspection of the external jugular veins. The height of engorgement in the neck veins with the patient in the erect position serves as a rough guide to the height of the pressure within. Normally the veins of the neck are never full in this position. In congestive heart failure, they may stand out like cords (Fig. 51). In some patients the veins of the neck are difficult to see, in which event the veins of the hand may be used. Normally these veins are collapsed at the right auricular level, so observations made on the distance above this level where collapse takes place give a rough estimate of the extent of the elevation of the venous pressure.

### ADDITIONAL LABORATORY AIDS IN DIAGNOSIS

**Urinalysis.** In addition to the routine urinalysis, a 24-hour specimen should be collected each day and the amount measured and recorded if the patient is suffering from congestive failure. The intake-output charts should be kept until circulatory balance is again restored, since they enable the physician to gauge the efficiency of digitalis and diuretic therapy.

**Routine blood studies** are essential. White-blood-cell counts are valuable in estimating the severity and extent of the lesion as well as the progress in rheumatic infection, subacute bacterial endocarditis, and coronary occlusion. Serologic studies for syphilis are most helpful in establishing the etiology in doubtful cases. A positive serologic finding almost always indicates that syphilitic infection is present. However, a positive test does not localize the lesion and hence does not prove that the particular disease complex under consideration is luetic. Consequently the clinician must evaluate the positive serology in relationship to the whole clinical picture. The incidence of false positive results is 1 per cent

or less when a careful worker employs a standard technic and when the following diseases are excluded: infectious mononucleosis, leprosy, malaria, relapsing fever, yaws, and trypanosomiasis. On the other hand, a negative report does not always exclude syphilitic infection because the sensitivity of the best technics in use today is capable of detecting syphilis in only about 80 to 90 per cent of the cases. In other words, 10 to 20 per cent of syphilitics will yield false negative serologic reports. In the latter group of patients a provocative Wassermann test may be helpful.

**LOW-GRADE, CONTINUOUS FEVER.** Repeated blood cultures should be made whenever a low-grade, continuous fever is observed, particularly in the presence of an old rheumatic lesion. A large amount of blood may be required if organisms in the blood stream are few.<sup>208</sup> The most common organism isolated from the blood in heart disease is a member of the *Streptococcus viridans* group. When a positive blood culture is obtained, the finding should be confirmed with one or two additional cultures. One patient brought to my attention had 16 positive cultures over a period of several weeks. Unless a special study is being made, it is preposterous to inflict so many tests on a patient whose prognosis is usually hopeless.

**BACTERIAL ENDOCARDITIS.** It is likewise true that many cases of bacterial endocarditis remain undiagnosed, because the disease is not suspected. A blood culture, which often clinches the diagnosis, may not be made because the physician hesitates to undertake a procedure which appears to be outside his field. In practice, however, the taking of a blood culture is about as difficult as taking a blood sample for a Wassermann examination or chemical studies. The following technic is recommended.\*

Prepare a stock of 10 per cent solution of sodium citrate, place 0.5 cc. of the solution in as many flasks as may be needed. Plug with cotton, dry and sterilize the containers in a hot air oven at 175° C. for one hour and a half. This amount of citrate is sufficient to prevent coagulation of amounts of blood up to 20 cc. Apply iodine and then alcohol over the median basilic vein. Under aseptic precautions, remove 10 to 15 cc. of blood, place in the flask and rotate the flask gently to insure uniform distribution of the anticoagulant. The sample is then ready to be sent to the bacteriological laboratory. If the cotton plug is not removed from the citrate flask, no contamination will occur for at least two months.

**Sedimentation Rate.** Many recent studies of the erythrocyte sedimentation rate have demonstrated that this property of the red blood cells is often a valuable guide in the treatment of many forms of cardiac disease.<sup>309, 421</sup> Since the technic is simple, it will repay the practitioner to add to his equipment the materials needed for carrying out this test.

**IN RHEUMATIC CARDITIS,** the sedimentation rate is increased when activity is present and tends to become normal with improvement.<sup>303</sup> It is useful, therefore, both in diagnosis and in management. In coronary occlusion a decrease in the sedimentation rate indicates healing of the infarcted area.<sup>340</sup>

\* Suggested by Dr. S. Brandt Rose, Chief, Division of Bacteriology, Philadelphia General Hospital. This method is used routinely for the taking of over 1500 blood cultures per year. In the laboratory, 2 cc. of blood is placed in melted agar and a pour-plate is made. The remainder of the blood is placed in broth.

In these cases the test should be considered along with other factors as a guide to the period of bed rest prescribed.

**SYPHILITIC HEART DISEASE**, the sedimentation rate is increased and returns to normal following specific treatment. In patients who have aortic regurgitation of questionable origin, the test may be of value. For example, at times we are unable to differentiate clinically between an old rheumatic lesion, arteriosclerosis, and syphilitic aortitis when aortic regurgitation is noted as the single lesion in a patient in middle life. The sedimentation rate is normal in the presence of an inactive rheumatic lesion and arteriosclerosis but will be increased in the patient with active syphilitic aortitis. Rapid rates may point to a poor prognosis in syphilitic aortitis, whereas a decreasing rate during treatment may be viewed as an encouraging sign.

**CONGENITAL HEART DISEASE**, if accompanied by cyanosis, is associated with an abnormally slow settling time of the red blood cells. Normal rates are present in cases showing absence of cyanosis.

**CONGESTIVE CARDIAC FAILURE**. During congestive cardiac failure arising from any cause, the sedimentation rate is slowed. The slowing parallels the failure, for when balance is restored, the rate returns to normal. Pulmonary infarcts speed the rate, but if they occur in the course of congestive failure, the tendency of the latter condition to slow the rate may balance the mechanism, and the result may be a normal figure.

**Basal Metabolic Rate**. Cardiac symptoms and signs accompany both hyperthyroidism and hypothyroidism. When the presence of either is suspected, a determination of the basal metabolic rate is indicated. This is accomplished by a determination of the rate of oxygen consumption. Ordinary activity increases the amount of oxygen utilized by the tissues; consequently the patient must be at complete rest for an hour before the determination is made. The test is usually carried out in the morning before breakfast, since food increases the metabolic rate and gives a false reading. The room where the test is made should be comfortable. If it is too hot or too cold, the rate will be altered.

A variety of small portable machines for determining the basal metabolic rate are on the market today. Most of them can be relied upon to give satisfactory results if care and tact are used in the preparation of the patient, and if ordinary skill is employed by the technician in charge of the apparatus.

The basal metabolic rate is an index of thyroid activity. When the reading is "plus," it indicates overactivity, while a "minus" figure indicates underactivity. The figure may show considerable variation, although over 90 per cent of normal individuals have a basal metabolism between minus 10 and plus 10.

**DEPRESSION OF THE BASAL METABOLIC RATE**. Readings from minus 10 to minus 20 are usually associated with deficiency of thyroid secretion. Myxedema states are accompanied by figures from minus 20 to minus 40 per cent. Here the clinical picture is typical and in addition the blood cholesterol will be found to be increased (page 373).

ELEVATION OF THE BASAL METABOLIC RATE should be interpreted with care. Excitement, emotion, digestion, and fever may give a sizable increase in the absence of thyroid dysfunction. In young people with thyrotoxicosis, rates as high as plus 70 per cent may be obtained. These are usually quickly lowered by rest and iodine (page 357). Essential hypertension or any neurologic condition associated with spasticity or tremor is apt to cause increase in the metabolic rate and care should be used in the interpretation of the readings in these patients. Likewise pernicious anemia and leukemia may increase the rate, and these diseases, although relatively rare, should always be ruled out. Congestive failure produces an elevation in the basal metabolic rate that, according to Harrison,<sup>149</sup> is secondary to the labored breathing associated with the dyspnea.

Estimation of the basal metabolic rate, to be of any value in the diagnosis of thyrotoxicosis, should be made by a skilled technician who uses dependable equipment and follows the above-mentioned rules. More than one initial determination should be made in each case. When frequent determinations are impossible in following the progress of a patient, the basal pulse rate may be used as a guide to the metabolic rate until the test is made. When the patient is at complete bed rest and the pulse rate is 80 or below, there is seldom present any great increase in the metabolic rate. Basal pulse rates over 100 are usually associated with elevation of the basal metabolism. Read's formula in these cases may be helpful;  $B. M. R. = 0.683 \{ \text{pulse rate} + 0.9 (\text{pulse pressure}) \} - 71.5$ . For example, if the pulse is 100 and the pulse pressure 60, the B. M. R. would be:  $0.683 (100 \text{ plus } 0.9 (60)) \text{ minus } 71.5 \text{ equals plus } 34 \text{ per cent}$ .

## NOMENCLATURE OF THE AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION

In order that advances may be made in the study of any disease, it is essential that workers in various parts of the country use the same terms in designating the same conditions. After establishing this uniformity in nomenclature, suitable criteria should be adopted for each entity. To meet this need, the Committee on Cardiac Clinics of the Association for the Prevention and Relief of Heart Disease, the predecessor of the Heart Committee of the New York Tuberculosis and Health Association, in 1923, prepared a nomenclature covering the diseases of the heart and blood vessels, which was introduced into various clinics. With certain changes this nomenclature was adopted by the American Heart Association and since this time has been used with success in all parts of the country.

Later another committee appointed by the Heart Committee drew up and published an extremely practical guide containing all the criteria for the diagnosis of heart disease. Revisions in 1932 and 1939 have increased the usefulness of this small volume.\* Its contents should be familiar to every physician who undertakes the treatment of cardiac patients.

\* Heart Disease. Distributed by the American Heart Association, 50 West 50th Street, New York, N. Y.

A glance at the most recent edition will show that the diseases of the heart are considered to include not only the structural changes found in the heart, pericardium, and the adjacent structures but also disturbances of function. As a result, this broader definition of disease brings within the scope of the nomenclature a number of disturbances that formerly had to be dismissed as "functional" even though their consequences might have been definitely disabling. The usefulness of the nomenclature is increased by this change.

The completed diagnosis of every cardiac patient should include one or more titles from each of the main headings of this nomenclature (page 66). There is first a statement concerning the etiology of the disease. If structural changes are discovered, these should be named, or it should be stated that there is no structural alteration. Under Part C the cardiac mechanism and any disturbances of cardiac physiology present are included. A diagnosis of the cardiac functional capacity and a statement of the patient's therapeutic classification complete the list. It is obvious that this comprehensive diagnosis depends on a careful consideration of every aspect of each case and affords a sound basis for management.

Certain patients may have symptoms or abnormal physical signs and yet it may not be possible to make a diagnosis of structural disease or any disturbance of cardiac physiology. These patients should be re-examined at some future date. At the time of the examination they are listed as "Possible Heart Disease." Patients who have no structural defects or physiologic disturbances of the heart, but who have another disease capable of causing heart disease, may be retained for further observation with the diagnosis of "Potential Heart Disease" and a statement of the possible etiologic factor.

#### ETIOLOGIC DIAGNOSIS\*

1. Anemia.
2. Arteriosclerosis.
3. Bacterial infection (specify if possible).<sup>1</sup>
4. Congenital anomaly.
5. Effort syndrome (neurocirculatory asthenia).
6. Hypertension.
7. Hyperthyroidism.<sup>1</sup>
8. Hypothyroidism.
9. Neoplasm.
10. Other etiologic factor (to be specified).
11. Psychoneurosis.
12. Pulmonary disease (to be specified).
13. Reflex action.
14. Rheumatic fever.<sup>1</sup>
15. Syphilis.<sup>1</sup>
16. Thoracic deformity.
17. Toxic agent (specify if possible).
18. Trauma.
19. Unknown.

<sup>1</sup> When one of these diagnoses is made, it should be stated, if possible, whether the etiologic factor is still active or inactive.

\* Reprinted by permission of N. Y. Tuberculosis and Health Ass'n.

ANATOMIC DIAGNOSIS

DISEASES OF AORTA AND PULMONARY ARTERIES

1. Aneurysm (specify location).
2. Aortitis.
3. Arteriosclerosis of aorta.
  - a. Without dilatation.
  - b. With dilatation.
4. Arteriosclerosis of pulmonary arteries.
5. Congenital anomaly (specify if possible).
6. Embolism of pulmonary arteries.
7. Injury of (specify location).
8. Other diseases of aorta (specify lesion).
9. Other disease of pulmonary arteries (specify lesion).
10. Rupture (spontaneous).
11. Thrombosis of aorta.
12. Thrombosis of pulmonary arteries.

CORONARY ARTERIES

13. Arteriosclerosis of coronary arteries.
  - a. With narrowing.
  - b. With occlusion.
14. Arteritis of coronary arteries.
15. Congenital anomaly of coronary arteries.
16. Embolism of coronary artery.
17. Injury of coronary artery (specify character of lesion).
18. Other disease of coronary artery (specify).
19. Periarthritis nodosa of coronary artery.
20. Stenosis of coronary ostium.
21. Thrombosis of coronary artery.

DISEASES OF MYOCARDIUM

(Including Conduction System and Heart as a Whole)

22. Aneurysm of heart (specify location).
23. Atrophy of heart.
24. Congenital anomaly (specify lesion if possible).
25. Degeneration of myocardium (specify type if possible).
26. Enlargement of heart (chambers involved may be specified).
  - a. Dilatation.
  - b. Hypertrophy.
27. Fatty infiltration of heart.
28. Fibrosis of myocardium.
29. Infarction of myocardium.
  - a. Recent.
  - b. Healed.
30. Injury of heart (specify character of lesion).
31. Myocarditis, active.
32. Neoplasm of heart (specify type).
33. No structural disease.
34. Other structural disease of heart (specify lesion).
35. Rupture of myocardium (specify location).
36. Thrombosis within heart (specify chamber affected).
37. Undiagnosed structural disease (specify location if possible)



## DISEASES OF ENDOCARDIUM AND VALVES

38. Congenital anomaly of endocardium of valves (specify lesion if possible).
39. Endocarditis, acute bacterial (specify organism).
40. Endocarditis, indeterminate.
41. Endocarditis, subacute bacterial (endocarditis lenta) (specify organism).
42. Injury of endocardium of valve (specify lesion).
43. Mural endocarditis.
44. Mural thrombosis.
45. Other structural disease (specify lesion if possible).
46. Rupture of valve (specify valve).
47. Sclerosis of valve (specify valve lesion).
48. Undiagnosed structural disease (specify location if possible).
49. Valvulitis, active (specify deformity).
50. Valvulitis, inactive (specify deformity).
51. Valvular deformity.
  - a. Aortic insufficiency.
  - b. Aortic stenosis.
  - c. Mitral insufficiency.
  - d. Mitral stenosis.
  - e. Pulmonary insufficiency.
  - f. Pulmonary stenosis.
  - g. Tricuspid insufficiency.
  - h. Tricuspid stenosis.
52. Calcification of pericardium.
53. Congenital anomaly of pericardium (specify lesion).
54. Hemopericardium.
55. Hydropericardium.
56. Injury of pericardium (specify character of lesion).
57. Neoplasm of pericardium.
58. Pericarditis, acute.
  - a. Fibrinous.
  - b. Serofibrinous.
  - c. Suppurative.
59. Pericarditis, chronic.
  - a. Adhesive with constriction.
  - b. Constrictive.
60. Pneumopericardium.

## PHYSIOLOGIC DIAGNOSIS

## CARDIAC MECHANISM

1. Arrhythmia (undiagnosed).
2. Auricular fibrillation.
  - a. Paroxysmal.
  - b. Persistent.
3. Auricular flutter.
  - a. Paroxysmal.
  - b. Persistent.
4. Auriculoventricular block.
  - a. Prolonged conduction time.
  - b. Incomplete.
  - c. Complete.
5. Auriculoventricular nodal rhythm (Junctional rhythm).
6. Bundle branch block.
7. Other arrhythmias (specify).

8. Paroxysmal tachycardia.
  - a. Auricular.
  - b. Auriculoventricular nodal (Junctional).
  - c. Ventricular.
  - d. Unknown origin.
9. Premature contractions.
  - a. Auricular.
  - b. Auriculoventricular (Junctional) nodal.
  - c. Ventricular.
  - d. Unknown origin.
10. Sinus arrest.
11. Sinus arrhythmia.
12. Sinus bradycardia.
13. Sinus rhythm, normal.
14. Sinus tachycardia.
15. Ventricular escape.
16. Ventricular fibrillation.
17. Wandering pacemaker
18. Valvular incompetence.
  - a. Aortic incompetence.
  - b. Mitral incompetence.
  - c. Pulmonic incompetence.
  - d. Tricuspid incompetence.
19. Adams-Stokes syndrome.
20. Anginal syndrome.
21. Cardiac insufficiency.
22. Carotid sinus syndrome.
23. Pulsus alternans.
24. Paroxysmal dyspnea.
25. Paroxysmal pulmonary edema.

## FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION

At the present time, there is no clinical test which will measure accurately the functional capacity of the heart. For the purpose of this classification, it is to be estimated by appraising the patient's ability to perform physical activity. The estimate is only approximate, for it is derived largely by inference, from the history. It represents an expression of opinion concerning the functional capacity of the patient as modified specially by his cardiac disease.

The diminution in functional capacity which results from a cardiac disorder may be accompanied by discomfort, or signs of impaired circulation, or both. The extent to which physical activity is curtailed and the severity of the symptoms caused by effort are helpful in estimating the degree of reduction in functional capacity. Usually structural changes are present in the heart. Occasionally, as for instance in certain cases of auricular fibrillation or paroxysmal tachycardia, or in certain patients suffering from the anginal syndrome, no anatomic lesions can be detected. Functional capacity is usually limited because of (1) cardiac insufficiency; (2) the anginal syndrome. Other less common causes of limitation are paroxysmal tachycardia and complete heart block. Physical signs may

be present or absent; but their presence or absence should not influence the rating.

The classification of patients according to their functional capacity is not to be used as a guide to formulating a plan for management. A therapeutic program, particularly with respect to regulation of physical activity, is based on information derived from many sources and is considered in the section on Therapeutic Classification. Functional classification should not be influenced by the character of the structural lesion or by judgment as to prognosis. Psychogenic disability is discounted. For example, cardiac functional capacity is not regarded as seriously limited when it is clear that the patient's incapacity is due to a psychoneurotic state, even though organic heart disease is present.

In the estimation of cardiac functional capacity, the term "ordinary physical activity" is used to describe the actual performance of which each patient was capable prior to the onset of manifest cardiac disease. Such factors as the presence of active infection in the heart, other acute infectious diseases, convalescence from an illness, muscular weakness, anemia, arthritis, and psychogenic disability may interfere with judging accurately the capacity for exercise. In cases of cardiac disease dating from early childhood a patient's normal functional capacity cannot be estimated. In estimating a patient's response to effort, a comparison must be made between his ordinary and his present capacity for physical exertion. Usually this estimate is based entirely on the history, particularly with reference to the patient's symptoms on effort. An accurate account of the reaction produced by varying degrees of exertion, such as walking on the level or up a grade, ascending stairs or running, is an essential part of the history. In general, the more intense the subjective symptoms, the more marked are the physical signs of cardiac insufficiency. Discrepancies may exist between the number and intensity of the physical signs, and the degree of subjective distress on effort. This is apt to be true particularly in patients suffering from the anginal syndrome, in whom objective evidences of disease may be slight or absent.

If there is doubt as to the rating by the method described, direct observation of a patient on performing exercise may be helpful. The occurrence of undue dyspnea and the appearance of cardiac pain are of special significance.

### CLASSIFICATION OF PATIENTS

**Class I. PATIENTS WITH CARDIAC DISEASE AND NO LIMITATION OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY.** Ordinary physical activity does not cause discomfort. Patients in this class do not have symptoms of cardiac insufficiency, nor do they experience anginal pain.

**Class II. (formerly II A). PATIENTS WITH CARDIAC DISEASE AND SLIGHT LIMITATION OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY.** They are comfortable at rest. If ordinary physical activity is undertaken, discomfort results in the form of undue fatigue, palpitation, dyspnea or anginal pain.

**Class III. (formerly II B). PATIENTS WITH CARDIAC DISEASE AND MARKED LIMITATION OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY.** They are comfortable at rest. Discomfort in the form of undue fatigue, palpitation, dyspnea or anginal pain is caused by less than ordinary activity.

**Class IV. (formerly III). PATIENTS WITH CARDIAC DISEASE WHO ARE UNABLE TO CARRY ON ANY PHYSICAL ACTIVITY WITHOUT DISCOMFORT.** Symptoms of cardiac insufficiency, or of the anginal syndrome, are present, even at rest. If any physical activity is undertaken, discomfort is increased.

## THERAPEUTIC CLASSIFICATION

The Therapeutic Classification is intended to serve as a guide in the management of patients. For each class, it gives a prescription for the amount of physical activity which is advised.

The functional capacity of the patient does not always determine the amount of physical activity which is permitted. For example, a child with active rheumatic carditis may not experience discomfort on playing baseball, yet the physician knows that rest in bed is imperative.\* There is frequently a difference between the amount of physical activity which the patient can undertake, in terms of his functional capacity, and that which he should attempt, in order to prevent further cardiac damage and bring about improvement. The recommendation as to physical activity is based upon both the amounts of effort possible without discomfort and the nature and severity of the cardiac disorder.

## CLASSIFICATION OF PATIENTS

**Class A.** Patients with cardiac disease whose ordinary physical activity need not be restricted

**Class B.** Patients with cardiac disease whose ordinary activity need not be restricted, but who should be advised against unusually severe or competitive efforts.

**Class C.** Patients with cardiac disease whose ordinary physical activity should be moderately restricted, and whose more strenuous habitual efforts should be discontinued.

**Class D.** Patients with cardiac disease whose ordinary physical activity should be markedly restricted.

**Class E.** Patients with cardiac disease who should be at complete rest, confined to bed or chair.

## POTENTIAL HEART DISEASE†

Patients in whom no cardiac disease is discovered, but whose course should be followed by periodic examinations because of the presence or history of an etiologic factor which might cause heart disease. The diagnosis in these cases is Potential Heart Disease. The etiologic diagnosis should be recorded.

\* Such a patient would be classified as I, E.

† There are patients in whom the symptoms or signs, though suggestive of cardiac disease, do not justify a definite diagnosis, and from whom is obtained a history of an etiologic factor which might cause heart disease. The diagnosis in such cases is both Potential Heart Disease and Possible Heart Disease.

## POSSIBLE HEART DISEASE

Patients with symptoms or signs referable to the heart, but in whom a diagnosis of cardiac disease is uncertain, should be classified tentatively as Possible Heart Disease. When there is a reasonable probability that signs or symptoms are not of cardiac origin, a diagnosis of Possible Heart Disease should not be made. Re-examination after a suitable interval will usually establish a definite diagnosis.

## ILLUSTRATIVE CASES

The adoption of this uniform system of nomenclature by every practicing physician is urged, since it permits a very brief summary of all the clinical and laboratory findings to be made at the end of the examination. The following illustrations demonstrate its usefulness.

**Case 1.** Miss F. B., an American school teacher of 28 years, when first seen was complaining of increasing dyspnea and palpitation. The past history was positive for rheumatic infection. Examination showed an apical diastolic thrill, a marked cardiac enlargement and an accentuated pulmonic second sound. There was edema of the feet, and inspiratory rales were heard at the lung bases. The temperature was normal, the pulse 84, and an occasional irregularity was noted. The electrocardiogram showed high P-waves in leads 2 and 3, a right axis deviation and frequent premature ventricular beats. The orthodiagram showed mitralization, an increase in cardiac size and enlargement of the left auricle in the right oblique position.

**CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS.** A. Etiologic: Rheumatic (Inactive). B. Anatomic: Cardiac enlargement. Mitral stenosis. Mitral insufficiency. C. Physiologic: Premature ventricular contractions. Cardiac insufficiency. D. Functional Classification: Class III. Therapeutic Classification: Class E.

**Case 2.** Mr. R. D., age 62. Occupation, insurance broker. Chest pain present on exertion for the past year, increasing in severity. Examination showed blood pressure 210/120, marked cardiac enlargement to the left, a loud blowing apical systolic murmur and accentuation of the aortic second sound. The electrocardiogram showed a marked left axis deviation and sharply inverted T1. The orthodiagram revealed cardiac enlargement of the hypertensive type and slight increase in aortic diameter. The Wassermann was negative.

**CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS.** A. Etiologic. Hypertension. Arteriosclerosis. B. Anatomic: Cardiac enlargement, chiefly left ventricular. Coronary sclerosis. Relative mitral insufficiency. C. Physiologic. Normal sinus rhythm. Anginal syndrome. D. Functional Classification: Class II. Therapeutic Classification: Class D.

If the history of the patient reveals two or more possible causes of heart disease, these should be listed. On the other hand, the etiology should be stated as unknown in those cases that present either definite structural changes in the heart or evidence of abnormal cardiac function for which no definite etiology can be determined. Many cardiac abnormalities that we are forced to list as unknown are the result of rheumatic infection. Case 3 is probably an example of this type. A smaller number may be caused by syphilis, although the presence of this infection cannot be proved clinically (Case 27).

**Case 3.** E. L., an American school boy of 14, was referred to the Cardiac Clinic of the Woman's College Hospital by a school physician because of increase in the size of

the heart. There were no symptoms referable to the cardiovascular system. The past history was negative for rheumatic infection. The family history revealed nothing of importance. The exercise tolerance of the patient was excellent.

PHYSICAL EXAMINATION revealed the presence of moderate cardiac enlargement, which was confirmed by roentgen examination. No other evidence pointing to cardiac disease could be elicited. The blood pressure, weight, and the nutritional history showed no departure from the normal. The blood Wassermann was negative. The blood count and urinalysis were negative. The electrocardiogram was normal.

CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS. A. Etiologic. Unknown. B. Anatomic. Cardiac hypertrophy. C. Physiologic. Normal sinus rhythm. D. Functional Classification: Class I. Therapeutic Classification: Class B.

## HEART FAILURE

The foxglove's leaves, with caution given,  
Another proof of favoring Heav'n  
Will happily display:  
The rapid pulse it can abate;  
The hectic flush can moderate  
And, blest by Him whose will is fate,  
May give a lengthen'd day.  
Withering's *Botany*

## MECHANISMS

## 2

### HEART FAILURE

The foxglove's leaves, with caution given,  
Another proof of favoring Heav'n

Will happily display:

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And, blest by Him whose will is fate,

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*Withering's Botany*

### MECHANISMS

The aim of all treatment in heart disease is to prevent, or, if this is impossible, to delay for a considerable period, the onset of heart failure. The signs and symptoms that point to myocardial weakness may be sudden in onset with congestive manifestations in various parts of the body, or they may develop slowly after the functional capacity of the heart has been impaired for a long time. In clinical practice heart failure is commonly referred to as "right sided" or "left sided," indicating that in the beginning, at least, the process is chiefly confined to one ventricle. This may be better understood when we consider the fact that in some conditions such as hypertension, aortic stenosis or regurgitation, or coronary disease with infarction, a continued strain is placed upon the left ventricle. Cardiac hypertrophy follows to enable the patient to combat these abnormalities and it may develop in the absence of symptoms. When this response has reached its maximum and the burden on the heart is unrelieved, failure becomes imminent. Dilatation of the left ventricle occurs, and the blood received from the right ventricle does not all reach the systemic circulation. Consequently an engorgement of the pulmonary circulation results. If the failure of the left ventricle takes place suddenly, the acute engorgement of the lungs may precipitate a paroxysm of cardiac asthma or paroxysmal nocturnal dyspnea. The situation then assumes the nature of an emergency; cough develops with expectoration of frothy, bloody sputum and is followed by orthopnea. If the onset of failure is slow, the right ventricle may be able to meet the demand placed upon it by the stagnation of the blood in the lungs by increasing its work. In time this chamber likewise shows hypertrophy. If failure of the left ventricle occurs gradually, dyspnea will increase, and it will appear on less exertion. Tachycardia will rarely be absent. Examination at this time will reveal an accentuation of the pulmonic second sound, giving evidence of the dilemma



present in the lesser circulation. If the pulmonic second sound has previously been normal, this finding takes on added significance at a follow-up examination. The systolic apical murmur that accompanies the increase in the pulmonic second sound generally signifies a functional regurgitation through the mitral valve. It is of interest, of course, to note this murmur, but it is much more important from the standpoint of management to study the heart sounds and to detect a gallop rhythm at the cardiac apex if it is present. Inspiratory râles at the lung bases should be searched for at each examination. Another valuable sign of exhaustion of the left ventricle is *pulsus alternans*, which can be demonstrated by the use of the sphygmomanometer (page 53). By this sign early failure of the left ventricle may be revealed and intensive treatment begun.

The most common cause of failure of the right ventricle is previous failure of the left side of the heart.<sup>373</sup> Sooner or later following left ventricular failure that is attended by the symptoms just described, the right ventricle dilates and fails, in which event the characteristic signs and symptoms of this condition are added to the clinical picture. Certain types of heart disease may predispose to failure of the right side of the heart, for example, mitral stenosis or extensive pulmonary fibrosis where resistance to the blood flow is materially increased (Table II). In these instances, after a long-

TABLE II\*  
FACTORS PRODUCING STRAIN ON THE HEART

| PRIMARY LEFT VEN-<br>TRICULAR STRAIN | PRIMARY RIGHT VEN-<br>TRICULAR STRAIN | PRIMARY STRAIN ON BOTH<br>VENTRICLES                                                                                         |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Arterial hypertension                | Mitral stenosis                       | Mitral insufficiency                                                                                                         |
| Aortic stenosis                      | Pulmonic valve stenosis               | Multiple valvular disease (chiefly aortic and mitral)                                                                        |
| Aortic insufficiency                 | Pulmonic valve insufficiency          | Severe anemia                                                                                                                |
| Infarction of the left ventricle     | Pulmonary endarteritis                | Arterial hypertension, aortic valve disease, or myocardial infarction <i>plus</i> factors producing right ventricular strain |
|                                      | Organic tricuspid insufficiency       |                                                                                                                              |
|                                      | Marked pulmonary fibrosis             |                                                                                                                              |
|                                      | Marked pulmonary emphysema            |                                                                                                                              |

PRIMARY STRAIN ON LEFT VENTRICLE AND SECONDARY STRAIN ON RIGHT VENTRICLE

Factors listed in the first column above plus failure of the left ventricle

\* (After Thompson and White).

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continued strain, the time arrives when the blood cannot be efficiently pumped through the lungs. There is a damming back into the right auricle, with functional regurgitation at the tricuspid orifice; and signs of right ventricular failure quickly appear. The liver at first bears the major part of the burden and accommodates all the excess blood that is possible. In cases where the failure occurs suddenly, there is acute liver engorgement, the capsule is stretched, and pain is usually present under the right costal margin. If the stasis takes place gradually, the liver enlargement may occur without local pain or tenderness, but the other signs of venous engorgement will be apparent in the cord-like neck veins (Fig. 51). If failure is unrelieved, effusions follow with the production of hydrothorax and ascites (See Fig 2). Renal stasis may cause oliguria and albuminuria.

While it is valuable, whenever possible, to consider right and left ventricular failure separately, there are instances when both sides fail together. An example of this is seen in the sudden appearance of signs of congestion that sometimes accompany the paroxysms of tachycardia or fibrillation which occur in the badly damaged hearts of older people. The patients with advanced signs of congestion, who are seen by the physician in emergencies, often present a picture of the late combination of both types. Owing to the predominance in practice of the factors contributing to left ventricular failure (high blood pressure and coronary artery disease), this form is much more apt to be encountered than right-sided failure.

There have been two schools of thought concerning the mechanisms behind the phenomena of congestive failure. The first or "back pressure" theory I have just reviewed. Stokes<sup>354</sup> and later Mackenzie were proponents of the "forward failure" theory. Mackenzie<sup>250</sup> stated that dropsy was due to diminution in the force that propels the blood through the capillaries, all the symptoms of heart failure arising because of this impaired blood supply.

The recent extensive investigations of Harrison<sup>149</sup> have thrown considerable light on the whole subject of cardiac failure, and in my opinion they furnish the necessary proof that the symptoms of congestive failure are not caused by diminished flow to the tissues. First of all, edema and dyspnea are not usually present in such conditions as shock and hemorrhage, which are associated with decreased cardiac output. Harrison shows that patients with congestive heart failure have been observed who have normal figures for cardiac output; and these figures do not increase when congestion clears. Finally, he offers in evidence the fact that the therapeutic measures forming the backbone of successful treatment of cardiac failure (venesection, digitalis, and diuretics) do not cause increase in the output of the heart.

## CLASSIFICATION

A better understanding of the various types of cardiac failure and their underlying mechanisms is most essential before therapy can be discussed.

The following classification has been proposed by Harrison (Table III):

TABLE III \*  
CIRCULATORY FAILURE

I. FORWARD FAILURE

- A—Forward Failure of the Peripheral Vascular Apparatus ("shock," "collapse")
  - 1—Hematogenic ("secondary shock")
  - 2—Neurogenic ("primary shock")
  - 3—Vasogenic
- B—Forward Failure of the Heart
  - 1—Sudden Death (Due to Ventricular Fibrillation)
  - 2—Cardiac Syncope
    - (a) Neurogenic
      - Psychogenic—"simple syncope,"  
"vasovagal" syncope
    - (b) Reflex
      - Carotid Sinus Syncope
      - "Vago-vagal" Syncope
      - Oculo-cardiac Syncope (?)
    - (c) Cardiogenic
      - Adams-Stokes Syndrome
      - Syncope attacks in patients with lesions of aortic valve
  - 3—Cardiac Collapse
    - (a) Marked tachycardia
      - Auricular Flutter
      - Auricular Fibrillation
      - Auricular Tachycardia
      - Ventricular Tachycardia
    - (b) Acute, severe, myocardial injury
      - Coronary Thrombosis
      - Diphtheritic Myocarditis
    - (c) Mechanical hindrance to heart
      - Cardiac Tamponade (a sudden accumulation of blood or fluid in the pericardium).
      - Massive Pulmonary Embolism
      - Ball Valve Thrombus obstructing mitral orifice
      - Inversion of mitral leaflet

II. BACKWARD FAILURE

- A—Failure of the Left Side of the Heart
- B—Failure of the Right Side of the Heart
- C—Failure of Both Sides of the Heart

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The peripheral circulation may fail under a variety of circumstances, acute hemorrhage (hematogenic), reflex or psychic disturbances (neurogenic), or following the action of substances like histamine, acetyl choline or adenylic acid directly on the vessels (vasogenic). The symptoms that ensue (termed "shock" or "collapse") consist of weakness and vertigo that may be followed by syncope and unconsciousness in severe cases, fall in body temperature, and sweating. No dyspnea appears. The patient has a grayish color, a rapid, feeble pulse, a decreasing blood pressure, and is able to lie flat in bed. Inspection will likewise show that the veins of the neck are not engorged.

These symptoms may be caused in a variety of ways. For example, less blood may be returned to the heart owing to a decreasing venous pressure; consequently the output of the heart will be reduced. A diminished blood

ing of failure from mechanical hindrance to the cardiac action is eversion of the mitral valve (page 365).

This classification of the varieties of forward heart failure as well as the mechanisms responsible should be familiar to every physician. It permits so clear an understanding of the many aspects of the problem that it cannot help but result in better treatment. "Backward failure" (the dyskinetic syndrome or failure of the congestive type) will be considered in the remainder of this chapter.

The careful examination of the myocardium at autopsy in cases of "backward failure" generally shows no anatomic change. The old term, "chronic myocarditis," so often used in referring to patients with congestive failure following hypertensive heart disease, has been discarded owing to the fact that no fibrosis or inflammatory changes can be found. Heart failure is purely a functional condition that is produced by exhaustion associated with certain chemical changes in the cardiac muscle fibers. These important changes elude the pathologist at post mortem. The various conditions that bring about this functional change by the extra burden they impose on the circulation are numerous. Included here are: long-continued hypertension, valvular lesions, recurrent carditis, coronary thrombosis, thyrotoxicosis, pulmonary fibrosis, congenital defects, uncontrolled abnormal rhythms or effusions into the pericardial sac. Environmental or occupational factors are likewise important in producing the evidences of failure at an earlier date in some patients than they appear in others. Except in instances of overwhelming rheumatic infection or in the presence of marked congenital defects, "backward failure" is rarely met in children, while it often complicates the course of rheumatic heart disease in young adults. There is a marked increase in the incidence of congestive failure in patients over 40 years of age because of the greater number of etiologic agents present at this time that are capable of placing the necessary strain on the myocardium.

Sodeman and Burch,<sup>319</sup> in a recent study of the precipitating causes of congestive failure in 100 consecutive cases, found that a definite cause could be assessed in 52.9 per cent of the instances. In the patients under their care who showed a gradual onset of failure without demonstrable cause, the prognosis was poor. Over 95 per cent of this group failed to *compensate sufficiently to undertake minimal activity. If a cause was found and removed, the prognosis, they discovered, was much improved, for in 75 per cent of these instances there was sufficient strength regained to permit at least minimal activity. The etiologic diagnosis was found to be significant in only one group of patients—those suffering from syphilitic heart disease with aortic regurgitation. These patients, when congestive failure developed, were usually unable to regain their balance regardless of the precipitating cause.*

Any circumstance that places a transient and, at times trivial strain on the circulatory apparatus, may act as a precipitating cause of failure. In children, upper respiratory infections leading to reactivity of a rheumatic process are largely to blame. Overexertion in any of its forms may break

a delicate balance and cause signs of congestion to appear. Pregnancy, hemorrhage, overeating, overindulgence in alcohol, or mental shock may likewise act as precipitating causes. In older patients, urinary-tract infections, particularly those associated with prostatic obstruction, cause increase in the blood pressure and this may upset the cardiac balance. Consequently, an attempt should be made in every patient treated for congestive failure to determine the cause of the breakdown. Its significance as far as future management is concerned is obvious.

Fever often accompanies congestive failure. In some cases when of slight degree, no demonstrable cause may be evident, in which event it is customary to attribute the fever to the congestive failure. However, when the increase in the temperature is more marked, a complication should be suspected and confirmatory evidence carefully sought. The four most common complications in order of their frequency in a series of cases studied by Kinsey and White<sup>190</sup> were: pulmonary infarction, pulmonary infection, active rheumatic infection, and acute coronary thrombosis.

## TREATMENT OF CONGESTIVE FAILURE

### GENERAL MEASURES

**Making the Cardiac Patient Comfortable.** The first indication in the treatment of congestive failure is to make the patient as comfortable as possible. The special bed shown in Fig. 38 is ideal but is usually available only for hospital treatment. Some supply houses rent these special beds at low figures for patients undergoing treatment at home, and at times the problem may be solved in this way. If the whole bed is not obtainable, a special spring that fits the bed already in use may be secured.

In the absence of special beds, the patient can be made more comfortable by discarding the various back rests (usually the canvas type) already in use and mobilizing the supply of household pillows. The large ones are stacked, and one is placed under the knees. Smaller, softer pillows are convenient for the head and under the elbows. If the elbows are protected from the start, considerable discomfort will be spared the patient at a later date.

When the treatment is carried out at home, it will usually be better to use the bedside commode. The exertion of getting out of bed to the commode is less than would be expended trying to use the bed pan satisfactorily. In an emergency commodes may be constructed easily from an old chair.

Large doses of cathartics certainly do not add to the comfort of the patient at the beginning of treatment. They are no longer given with the purpose of promoting the loss of large quantities of fluid by bowel, for the modern diuretics make this procedure unnecessary. Today the patient is fortunate in that he takes his digitalis "straight" and not mixed with various ingredients of a violent nature. The added rest that this affords contributes in no small degree to the chances of recovery. Later in the course of treat-

ment, mild laxatives may be given, but it is always well to avoid the effervescent variety. Epsom salts in small doses is the cheapest and best of the group and may be given occasionally in the early morning, an hour before breakfast.

The fact that the patient has been placed in bed with his position properly adjusted does not guarantee complete physical and mental rest. Worry, emotional excitement and noises will induce a state of continued tension of all the skeletal muscles in many patients. Until this is relieved,

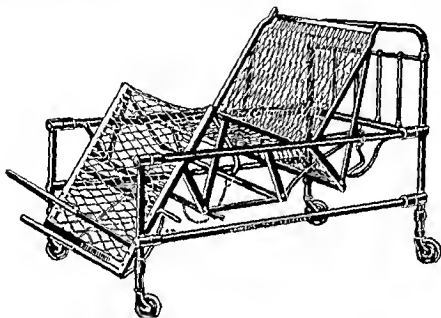


FIG. 38. The cardiac bedstead. (Redrawn from *Diseases of the Heart*, Sir Thomas Lewis.)\*

full benefit of any treatment becomes impossible. Considerable relief can be gained, as Osler stated, by the simple process of "slowing the body engines." While a habit of living cannot be abolished at a command, a skillful practitioner soon learns enough about his patient to suggest measures that will result in a greater degree of relaxation.

The best drug with which to begin treatment of an attack of congestive failure is morphine. A hypodermic injection of 15 mg. ( $\frac{1}{4}$  grain) as soon as the patient is seen and the diagnosis is established acts like a charm. It quiets the patient physically and mentally and should never be withheld unless a marked idiosyncrasy to the drug is known to exist. Morphine allays dyspnea as well as restlessness and insomnia, and during the calm that follows its administration definite plans may be made for the future care of the patient. The dose may be safely repeated for the acute episodes of dyspnea until this symptom is controlled, since the danger of drug addic-

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This does not mean that the second effect is necessarily a reflex action. Many pharmacologists believe that digitalis stimulates the vagus center. It seems certain, however, that it does not directly stimulate the vagus endings in the heart muscle.

The direct or peripheral effect of digitalis appears first, manifesting itself by an alteration of the T-wave of the electrocardiogram. This initial indication of the action of the drug may be followed by a predominance of either the vagal or the direct effect.

**Vagal Effect.** A study of the vagal action which in most, if not all, respects tends to counteract the direct effects of the drug, suggests an attempt on the part of the controlling mechanisms of the heart to compensate for the action of the drug. Thus the direct or peripheral action of the drug: (1) increases the irritability and muscular tone, (2) strengthens the contraction, (3) prolongs the refractory phase of the myocardium, (4) slows but strengthens conduction by prolonging the refractory phase of the conducting system. The vagal stimulation: (1) decreases muscular irritability, (2) weakens the auricular contractions, (3) shortens the refractory phase and increases the rate but weakens the strength of conduction.

In spite of this apparently opposite effect on the part of the vagus, both actions coincide in interfering with conduction through the A-V bundle and therefore in tending to produce A-V block. Consequently, in auricular fibrillation the ventricular rate is slowed by the direct action of digitalis which prolongs the refractory phase of the bundle of His and by the vagal action which weakens the conduction. On auricular fibrillation per se the direct effect of the drug may decrease the rate through the prolongation of the refractory phase, while the vagus tends to increase the rate by shortening the refractory period. The vagus effect usually predominates in the auricle increasing the rate of the fibrillation. Digitalis, therefore, does not stop the fibrillation but actually makes the auricle fibrillate more rapidly. Paradoxically, this is beneficial, for a speeding of the auricular rate increases the A-V block and leads to further ventricular slowing.

The late toxic effects of digitalis are characterized by a predominance of the direct action of the drug on the myocardium and the conducting system. Consequently atropine is of no value in digitalis poisoning, since the main action now is a direct muscular one.

If, to the effects mentioned, we add the depression of the heart's pacemaker, the sino-auricular node, that results from the stimulation of the vagus when sinus rhythm prevails, we have all the important effects of the digitaloid drugs, and the clinical observations can be explained in terms of these actions. In therapeutic doses digitalis has no direct effect on the peripheral vascular tree or on the coronary arteries; however, indirectly, the coronary flow is altered, since the coronaries are of necessity influenced by the rate and the degrees of contraction and relaxation of the heart as a whole.

Clinical studies have shown that the administration of digitalis decreases the heart size, both in health and in the presence of congestive failure.

This effect is consistent and can be demonstrated by careful roentgen-ray examinations. Stewart and Cohn,<sup>324, 325</sup> also Harrison and his co-workers,<sup>150, 151</sup> have shown that in health digitalis diminishes cardiac output and minute volume from 20 to 35 per cent, while in patients with heart failure, improvement is accompanied by a marked increase in the cardiac output. The explanation of this apparent contradiction is to be found in the fact that under normal conditions the heart is at an optimum size for the performance of its work. Digitalis decreases its size according to surface area measurements to three-fourths or four-fifths of the normal and to that extent lessens its output.

However, in the enlarged heart of decompensation, the cavities are dilated but the myocardium is weak, and the output is low. Digitalis through its action on the irritability and contractility decreases the size of the cavities but not to a degree less than normal. Although for the normal heart and for the heart of congestive failure with normal rhythm, the increased irritability and contractility and decrease in the heart size satisfactorily explain the results obtained, for the decompensated heart the explanation must never minimize the importance of the drug's effect on decreasing A-V conduction. Indeed, the most profound and dependable results from digitalis occur in these cases of auricular fibrillation or flutter with decompensation when the drug decreases A-V conduction to a "toned-up" ventricular muscle. Clinical improvement follows the slow rate and increased power of the ventricle regardless of the auricular rate.

The quantitative improvement in the circulatory rate following digitalis may be shown by simple tests based on the length of time required by certain substances injected in the median cephalic vein at the elbow to reach other areas. For example, if histamine is used, a flush of the face may be watched for (arm to face time); if decholin is used, the bitter taste of the drug may be the end point (arm to tongue time); or if ether is injected, the appearance of the characteristic odor on the breath may permit a calculation of the arm to lung time to be made. Calculation of the circulation time may be a valuable aid in differentiating cardiac from bronchial asthma when the diagnosis is in doubt. In uncomplicated bronchial asthma, the circulation time is normal (page 115).

In man, digitalis produces no important changes in the systolic blood pressure unless the previous level was either high or low, and under these conditions the drug tends to bring the systolic pressure back to normal. The increase in the low blood pressure would appear to be the logical sequence of the improved cardiac efficiency. However, the fall in the pressure level observed in some cases of the hypertensive type deserves a word of comment. The failing heart in hypertension has produced a deficient circulation, which is accompanied by a poor oxygen supply to the vasomotor center. An attempt on the part of this area to compensate by increased activity causes a rise in the systolic pressure. Digitalis by improving the cardiac efficiency relieves the partial anoxemia of the vasomotor center, which in turn decreases its activity, and the systolic pressure



is lowered. The action on the diastolic pressure is more uniform as in the majority of cases it is reduced, the net result being an increase in the pulse pressure.

### TOXICITY

Digitalis should always be prescribed with care. Unpleasant effects that are manifestations of beginning toxic action need not attend the successful therapeutic administration of the drug. As Withering observed:

The sickness thus excited is extremely different from that occasioned by any other medicine; it is peculiarly distressing to the patient; it ceases, it recurs again as violent as before—(Fig. 39).

One hundred and fifty years ago Withering classified this action of digitalis as a direct one upon the stomach mucosa, an opinion based upon the fact that digitalis had previously had considerable reputation as an emetic. The later demonstration that large amounts of digitalis given by hypodermic injection still produced nausea and vomiting did not convince the physicians of that day that the action was not a gastric one, for they then believed that the drug was excreted into the stomach. This early toxic action, however, is on the vomiting center which becomes hypersensitive to reflexes, believed by the author to arise from the heart, while others claim that they arise from the abdominal viscera, chiefly the liver. All preparations of digitalis, if they are active and capable of giving good therapeutic results, produce nausea and vomiting when administered in large doses.

Anorexia and nausea usually precede the vomiting of overdigitalization, and these symptoms should serve as a warning. The nausea comes in periods or waves that usually disappear within two days after the drug has been discontinued.

In rare cases diarrhea may appear as a toxic manifestation of digitalis action, while cerebral symptoms should be watched for, particularly in older subjects. It is important to remember that these signs may occur without the appearance first of nausea and vomiting and are due either to a direct effect on the cerebral centers or to a change in the cerebral circulation. If mercurial diuretics are being administered at the same time, the issue is further complicated. Weiss<sup>384</sup> believes that the onset of the psychosis occasionally seen following the administration of digitalis accompanies circulatory improvement. In his opinion, the cerebral circulation is already abnormal, owing to chronic sclerotic changes, and the entrance into it of the toxic products mobilized during the long standing edema causes the onset of the psychosis. Headaches as well as confusion may follow digitalis administration, the latter progressing in some cases to delirium. Loss of memory in older subjects following digitalis is not uncommon. The exact cause of disturbances of vision that occasionally follow digitalis is unknown. Dimness of vision, distortion of colors, and, rarely, blindness may follow large doses of the drug.

( 114 )

## EFFECTS, RULES, and CAUTIONS.

THE Foxglove when given in very large and quick-ly-expected doses, occasions sickness, vomiting, purging, giddiness, confused vision, objects appearing green or yellow (increased secretion of urine, with frequent micturition to part with it, and sometimes inability to retain it), slow pulse, cramp as slow as 33 in a minute, cold sweats, convulsions, syncope, death.\*

When given in a less violent manner, it produces most of these effects in a lower degree; and it is curious to observe, that the sickness, with a certain dose of the medicine, does not take place for several hours after its exhibition has been discontinued; that the flow of urine will often precede, sometimes accompany, frequently follow the sickness at the distance of some days, and not unfrequently be checked by it. The sickness thus excited, is extremely different from that occasioned by any other medicine; it is peculiarly distressing to the patient, and thus it will continue to recur for three or four days, at distinct and unequal intervals.

These

\* I have observed sickness in doses not amounting to a scruple of the extract—three grains at page 113. 114 and 115.

FIG. 39. Page 184 of William Wubering's  
*An Account of the Foxglove*, 1785.

## OF PATIENTS.

191

## I N F E R E N C E S.

TO prevent any improper influence, which the above recitals of the efficacy of the medicine, aided by the novelty of the subject, may have upon the mind of the younger part of my readers, in raising their expectations to too high a pitch, I beg leave to deduce a few inferences, which I apprehend the facts will fully support.

I. That the Digitalis will not universally act as a diuretic.

II. That it does do so more generally than any other medicine.

III. That it will often produce this effect after every other probable method has been fruitfully tried.

IV. That if this fails, there is but little chance of any other medicine succeeding.

V. That in proper doses, and under the management now pointed out, it is mild in its operation, and gives less disturbance to the system, than squills, or almost any other active medicine.

VI. That when dropsy is attended by pulsy, untamed thirst, great debility, or other complication of disease, under the Digitalis, no other effect can

192

## I N F E R E N C E S.

really can be more than obtain a truce to the urgency of the symptoms; unless by gaining time, it may afford opportunity for other medicines to combat and subvert the original disease.

VII. That the Digitalis may be used with advantage in every species of dropsy, except the encephalic.

VIII. That it may be made subservient to the cure of disease, unconnected with dropsy.

IX. That it has a power over the motion of the heart, to a degree yet unobserved in any other medicine, and that this power may be converted to salutary ends.

## P R A C T I C A L

FIG. 41. Page 192, *Ibid.*

Toxic doses of digitalis cause an increase in the irritability of the myocardium, resulting in the production of extrasystoles (more often ventricular than auricular), coupling or pulsus bigeminus (see Fig. 248) and various other arrhythmias. Large doses of digitalis may be followed by mechanisms of a much more serious nature. Auricular fibrillation may appear suddenly. Ventricular centers may be stimulated so that they give rise to a succession of impulses resulting in a paroxysm of tachycardia. This is extremely dangerous, since in some instances it may pass into ventricular fibrillation. It is very easy to produce this sequence in the laboratory animal by overdosage of digitalis, and it seems reasonable to suppose that the same mechanism produces death in man when care has not been used in the administration of the drug.

The effect of digitalis on the sino-auricular node, produced principally, if not entirely, through vagal action, results in marked grades of sinus arrhythmia (see Fig. 194) and may produce sinus arrest (see Fig. 180). Large doses may markedly depress the S-A node with the production of a dangerous bradycardia. Rarely does the depression of the A-V conduction proceed to complete heart block, although I have seen this occur several times in exceptional cases following the administration of small doses of digitalis (see Fig. 246).

Some investigators have reported an eosinophilia following digitalis administration<sup>34</sup> and claim that this is evidence of an allergic effect. Possibly there are allergic reactions to digitalis, but too often the term has been used to cover our ignorance of fundamental reactions and to lull us into a complacency typical of the mind in the Dark Ages. I have never seen urticarial rashes or any manifestations that would tend to suggest an allergic reaction. Occasionally patients exhibit a hypersensitivity to the drug and show toxic effects following small doses (page 107). However, these responses are by no means allergic. Patients of this type should be managed without the use of digitalis.

To the informed astute observer, experience with digitalis in the clinic and at the bedside is the final teacher, and as this experience increases, it should be possible to employ the drug efficiently with only an occasional need for a cardiologist or the electrocardiograph.

#### PHARMACEUTICAL PREPARATIONS

It is an unnecessary waste of time for the busy practitioner to attempt to familiarize himself with all the different digitalis preparations that flood the market. Every one that is fit to use at all has essentially the same action. Furthermore, many of the proprietary and imported brands are too expensive for the patient in moderate circumstances. Since digitalis in many cases, once begun, will be continued for a long time, it is wise to start with a dependable, inexpensive preparation. This is the U.S.P. whole-powdered leaf in capsule or made up in pills or tablets. The U.S.P. tincture is equally efficient, but it is not as convenient, has an unpleasant taste, does not keep as well, and the dosage is not as easy to regulate. The claims

of the representatives of different drug houses that their preparations of digitalis do not produce nausea and lack the bad effects of the numerous other preparations of the drug that patients are in danger of having handed to them across the drug counter, as far as I am concerned, fall on deaf ears. Solubility tests, that salesmen come prepared to perform before my eyes with the premise that the test tube in the hand represents the stomach, leave me unmoved. On occasion I have been informed that I fail to understand and appreciate the great amount of trouble and research that their company has been through to bring this special preparation of digitalis to me in its purified state. In any event, my primary interest is still in the "pills" made from the U.S.P. whole powdered leaf of digitalis, which assures their potency; and the only test I put them to is to make certain that they can be readily crushed between the fingers. If so, they are satisfactory. It is well to keep in mind that the patient can be saved money when the maintenance dosage has been established by prescribing digitalis in quantities sufficient to last several months. Always prescribe digitalis alone and not in a preparation containing other ingredients, for variation of the daily dosage is difficult in the presence of other drugs. Finally, attention should be called to the fact that the per Gm. potency of the U.S.P. XI digitalis exceeds that of the U.S.P. X preparations by 25 to 30 per cent.<sup>68</sup> One hundred milligrams of U.S.P. XI digitalis powder contain one U.S.P. unit of digitalis which is identical with the international unit.

### DOSAGE

The dose of digitalis is governed by the degree of cardiac failure and the susceptibility of the patient. Eggleston advised one cat unit of digitalis (approximately 80 mg. of U.S.P. XI powder or 0.8 cc. of U.S.P. XI tincture) for each ten pounds of body weight, less the estimated amount of edema fluid present, but this amount should be regarded as approximate only. It is safe to say that the amount of digitalis whole leaf necessary for the complete digitalis effect in an adult of average weight lies between 0.75 to 1.50 Gms. (12 to 24 grains). At the first visit, I generally prescribe 24 of the 0.1 Gm. (1½ grains) tablets of digitalis whole leaf. During the first 24 hours, ten of these may be given, during the next 24 hours 0.5 Gm. (7½ grains) may be taken. The patient then should be carefully watched, since the amount that has been given is close to or equivalent to that needed for the therapeutic digitalization. If the occasion is not an emergency, one tablet, 0.1 Gm. (1½ grains) may be prescribed after each meal for one week, and the patient examined carefully at the end of this time. It is not wise to calculate the desired amount of digitalis by the Eggleston method, send the patient away, and trust that he will experience no untoward effects until seen again. Good treatment today does not consist in pushing the digitalis "until it acts on the kidneys, stomach, pulse or bowels," and in this respect we are forced to depart slightly from the rules laid down by Withering.

Observation usually tells us when we are reaching the maximal thera-

peutic dose. The pulse slows (particularly where fibrillation is present) to 70 beats per minute or less. Diuresis appears as the congestive phenomena fade. There may be anorexia. The amount should then be cut to 0.1 Gm. (1½ grains) daily. This is the so-called "maintenance dose," and it can, in most cases, be continued indefinitely. Of course, exceptions occur, and the exact amount of the maintenance dose will have to be adjusted to the patient by experiment, for it will depend on the amount of the drug excreted and destroyed in the body daily. For the average patient this figure will be found to vary between 0.06 and 0.18 Gm. (1 to 3 grains). Variations occur in each case, and the amount may even be different in the same patient under varied circumstances. Adjusting this maintenance dose of digitalis is one of the physician's important duties at each follow-up examination.

Where auricular fibrillation has been present and the rate reduced to 70 by digitalis, the patient will be much relieved. At this stage of treatment the physician should take the necessary time to explain the aims of therapy and the action of digitalis, for it is possible to train the patient to become skilled in the matter of maintenance dosage. It is not dangerous to make a student of the pulse out of the patient with chronic auricular fibrillation, since much of his future efficiency depends on the successful use of digitalis just as the future of the diabetic depends on the accurate balance between insulin and diet. Education of the patient in all matters concerning his disease is invaluable in both instances.

The physician should govern the dose of digitalis he prescribes by the interval between visits. Large doses should not be given unless it is certain that the physician will go to see the patient the next day. Ambulatory patients in clinic or private practice as a general rule should be slowly digitalized.

When it is necessary to digitalize a child, the amount per pound of body weight in some cases may be found to be greater than that needed for the adult, owing to the higher metabolic rate of children. This amount has been variously estimated, but again EACH CASE SHOULD RECEIVE A DOSAGE DEPENDING ON THE CLINICAL SYMPTOMS AND THE OBSERVED EFFECT OF THE ADMINISTRATION. In my experience, digitalis does not have the dramatic results in children that are observed in adults. This may be due to the rare occurrence in children of auricular fibrillation and flutter.

It is just as serious an error to give amounts of digitalis too small to be of value as it is to produce toxic effects. While the modern tendency seems to be to prescribe large doses, occasional cases are seen in consultation where the doses administered could have no influence whatsoever on the course of the cardiac failure. In these instances, good results invariably follow increase in the digitalis. The administration of too small doses generally occurs in cases where the tincture has been prescribed, and the amount to be taken stated in drops. Drops will be found to vary according to the type of dropper, the temperature, the rate of dropping, and the

angle of the dropper. If the tincture must be used, always have the patient measure the dose in a graduated dropper or medicine glass.

### INDICATIONS

When digitalis is needed, the method of saturation or digitalization that has been described is the only satisfactory way to prescribe the drug. When the patient is not showing signs of failure, small daily "tonic" doses have been recommended.<sup>27</sup> It may be quite possible to secure tonic effects in patients with organic heart disease of the hypertensive or rheumatic type and in this manner to delay the appearance of dilatation. These opinions, however, are based mainly on animal experimentation, and there exists as yet no satisfactory proof that small daily doses in man have the same beneficial action. Except in the presence of auricular fibrillation or flutter, I have not given digitalis to a patient with organic heart disease in the absence of signs of failure.

Rarely is it necessary to employ any other preparation of digitalis than the powdered whole leaf by mouth. Sometimes gastro-intestinal disturbances attending congestive failure call for the temporary adoption of another method of administration, and, in these instances, the digitalis may be given by rectum. Levy<sup>28</sup> finds digitan, an aqueous solution of digitalis, to be less irritating to the rectal mucosa than the alcoholic solution of digitalis. The equivalent of about 0.1 Gm. of the powdered leaf is contained in 1 cc. of digitan. Consequently, following a cleansing enema, an amount can be given up to 20 cc. through a rectal tube. If the digitalis is given in the tincture form, it must be well diluted to prevent irritation (approximately one volume of tincture to four volumes of physiologic saline). Absorption by rectum is usually good, and the speed of action is comparable with that observed when similar doses are given by mouth.

Intramuscular injections of digitalis preparations are painful. I quite agree with Fishberg<sup>100</sup> that this route is indicated only when it is impossible to enter a vein.

If there is a contraindication to the rectal administration and the emergency is great, the intravenous route may be used, provided the patient has not been receiving digitalis during the previous week.

Strophanthin (U.S.P.) is the preparation of choice for intravenous injection. The initial dose should not exceed 0.5 mg. (1/120 grain), and 24 hours later 0.3 mg. may be given to maintain the effects of the drug. When strophanthin is given intravenously, effects may be observed within ten minutes. It is a good plan when using this method to dissolve the strophanthin in 10 to 20 cc. of a 10 per cent dextrose solution and inject slowly. As soon as digitalis can be taken by mouth, the daily injections of strophanthin are discontinued. Brams and his associates<sup>49</sup> have shown, however, that daily injections of 0.3 mg. for as long as 24 consecutive days failed to produce significant clinical or electrocardiographic evidence of toxicity.

The pharmacologic properties of strophanthin are identical with those

of digitalis. Since strophanthin administered intravenously has a much faster action than digitalis given orally, it has a definite place in emergencies (page 398). In paroxysmal dyspnea and sudden congestive failure excellent effects may be obtained. I have seen two dramatic results follow the use of intravenous injections of strophanthin in the receiving ward. Both patients were women who developed sudden cardiac failure in the last months of pregnancy, and who had not been receiving digitalis previous to admission. I have also seen poor results follow the use of strophanthin in some patients who had postoperative tachycardia and in others who had organic heart disease but no evidence of congestive failure.

Ouabain, a crystalline glucoside from g-strophanthin, is injected in one-half the dose recommended for strophanthin. The strophanthins are less irritating and less cumulative than digitalis, but their absorption is so uncertain that their use by mouth is not advised.

Squill prepared from the bulb of the sea onion (*Scilla maritima*) has enjoyed a reputation as an efficient therapeutic remedy in a variety of conditions. Although employed for centuries in the treatment of dropsy, its real value in the management of heart disease and its position as a member of the digitaloid group were factors not fully recognized until 1865. The water-insoluble glucosides of squill (scillaren A and B) were isolated in 1934.

Recently Chamberlain and Levy<sup>34</sup> have called attention to the use of URGININ, which is a mixture of equal proportions of the two active water-insoluble glucosides, crystalline scillaren A and amorphous scillaren B. This preparation can be obtained in tablets containing 0.5 mg. (1/120 grain) of the mixed glucosides. Assay by the cat method has shown that one of these tablets has an average potency of 2.13 cat units.

The results obtained by the use of urginin in cases of congestive failure are similar to those obtained following the administration of digitalis. Diuresis is produced and the ventricular rate is slowed, particularly in the presence of auricular fibrillation. Levy and Chamberlain found that the average total effective dose of urginin is 9.0 mg. (18 cat units), and the daily maintenance dose is between 0.5 and 2.0 mg. in the presence of auricular fibrillation and 1.5 mg. in cases with sinus rhythm. Large single doses of urginin are apt to cause gastric disturbances. It is best to give 1.5 mg. (three tablets) three times daily after meals for two days, 1.0 mg. (two tablets) twice daily until the desired clinical effects are obtained, and then continue with 0.5 mg. (one tablet) twice daily as maintenance dose. As in the case of digitalis therapy, the plan should be changed to fit the individual patient. Urganin offers no advantages over digitalis in cases of congestive failure, and rectal administration of this preparation is unsuccessful.

Urganin has toxic effects similar to digitalis. Vander Veer and his associates,<sup>378</sup> reported the occurrence of nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea in patients on maintenance doses of urginin. They also observed characteristic toxic arrhythmias: ventricular tachycardia, coupling of ventricular prema-

ture beats, and auricular fibrillation. These manifestations depend largely on the severity of the cardiac damage and the care with which the drug is given. Patients who have slightly damaged hearts may complain of nausea and vomiting before any disturbances in cardiac rhythm are noted. On the other hand when severe myocardial damage is present, dangerous arrhythmias may appear before the calculated amount of the drug has been given. Although idiosyncrasy is fortunately rare, we do meet patients at times who exhibit a prejudice against the use of digitalis. In these instances urginin may be prescribed.

It is well to remember that all digitalis preparations deteriorate with age. Powdered leaf of digitalis, if kept dry, seems to be less affected than other preparations, which is another consideration that recommends it for routine use. Levy<sup>221</sup> calls attention to the rapid deterioration of aqueous solutions of k-strophanthin and of certain digitalis preparations when stored in ampules of soft glass, presumably caused by the alkali absorbed from the glass. Ampules of hard glass should always be used for these drugs.

### CONTRAINDICATIONS

Heart failure is not very often accompanied by situations that contraindicate digitalis therapy. There are other conditions, however, where the use of digitalis in the absence of signs of heart failure may be harmful. In cases of partial heart block, if there are present seizures that suggest Adams-Stokes attacks, the drug should not be used. It is no longer considered good practice to give digitalis in pneumonia unless the condition of the heart specifically requires it.<sup>421</sup> Digitalis may be harmful if given to patients who have angina or coronary occlusion in the absence of congestive manifestations. Caution should be used in giving large doses of calcium<sup>38, 133, 232-235</sup> or ephedrine<sup>174</sup> to patients who are being digitalized. Deaths have been reported in cases where intravenous calcium has been given to digitalized patients. In diphtheria, digitalis should be given with great care, since diphtheria toxin and digitalis have somewhat similar effects on the heart.

Some surgeons continue to increase the hazards of their anesthetics by giving digitalis routinely by mouth before operation and intramuscularly upon the slightest provocation postoperatively. It is without value in the absence of congestive failure pre-operatively, and most of the tachycardias I have seen postoperatively arise from shock and other extra cardiac causes where digitalis cannot be expected to be effective and in many instances is actually harmful. Except in the presence of a specific cardiac indication, digitalis is contraindicated with ether or chloroform. These anesthetics increase vagal tone. When the augmented vagal activity resulting from digitalis is imposed upon the exaggerated vagal activity of the anesthetic, a slight stimulation of the vagi may produce a prolonged diastolic pause. If this is preceded by a deep inspiration, a fatal exposure of the myocardium to the influence of the anesthetic may be the result.



## DIURETIC DRUGS

When the combined measures of bed rest and digitalis do not suffice in removing all edema fluid and restoring cardiac balance, we have at our command a group of drugs whose diuretic properties lend valuable assistance. The new members of this group of diuretics have already displayed so high a degree of efficiency combined with so low a toxicity that they are rapidly replacing the older drugs as well as some of the older methods of therapy. For this reason Southey's tubes are rarely needed by the modern practitioner, and scarification for the relief of extensive edema is seldom required.

The diuretic drugs may be conveniently grouped as the xanthines, the inorganic salts, urea, and the organic mercurials.

## XANTHINES

Members of the xanthine group have a low toxicity and may be administered by mouth, but often their action is disappointing. The least toxic, most efficient, and the least expensive member of the group is theobromine sodium acetate. It is administered as a tablet or a powder or in a capsule in doses of 0.5 Gm. ( $7\frac{1}{2}$  grains) three times daily.

Theophylline with ethylenediamine (aminophylline) is likewise a potent member of this series that can be given orally in doses of 0.1 Gm. ( $1\frac{1}{2}$  grains) three or four times daily or intravenously in doses of 0.24 Gm. in 10 cc. of physiological saline.

Theophylline (theocin) is used in oral doses of 0.2 Gm. (3 grains) three or four times daily, although it is likely to prove nauseous to some patients.

Theobromine calcium salicylate (theocalcin) causes less gastric disturbance and may be given in 1.0 Gm. (15 grains) doses after meals.

The mechanism of diuretic action of the xanthines may involve several factors, the relative importance of which may change under different conditions. These factors for which we have at present adequate experimental evidence may be briefly summarized as follows: (1) An increased glomerular filtration due to the elevation of the intraglomerular pressure. (2) An increase in the number of the functioning glomeruli. (3) A decreased tubular absorption. (4) An increase in the non-colloidal constituents of the blood.

It is best to give a xanthine preparation as long as its effect is maintained in the absence of untoward effects. Many clinicians administer members of this group in full doses for three to five days. They are then withdrawn and used subsequently as indicated over a similar period.

## INORGANIC SALTS

**Chlorides and Nitrates.** Important among the saline diuretics are the chlorides of ammonia, potassium, and calcium, and the nitrates of ammonia and potassium, each of which should be given orally. The presence of these salts in the blood raises the osmotic pressure of the

plasma with the result that water from the tissues and lymph is transferred more rapidly to the blood, transported to the kidneys, where it passes with the salts into the glomerular filtrate. The tubules refuse to absorb the unneeded salts, hence they, with the water they withdraw from the tissues, pass from the body.

When the ammonium salts or calcium chloride are used, the typical salt effect is augmented by an acidosis, the extent of which will depend upon the amount of the salt administered. Theoretical objections can be raised against the use of nitrates which in rare instances may in part be changed to nitrites by the intestinal flora and also to the potassium salts, which, although entirely nontoxic when administered orally to the normal patient, might accumulate in some cardiac cases with decreased renal function in sufficient quantities to embarrass the heart. While I consider these effects highly improbable, ammonium chloride is the saline diuretic of my choice. When administered alone in large quantities, ammonium chloride is apt to cause gastric irritability; consequently it is better to give it in the form of an enteric coated tablet of 0.5 Gm. ( $7\frac{1}{2}$  grains). Two or three of these administered after meals and at bedtime usually cause no disturbance of digestive function. In some patients a daily dose of 10 Gms. may be required to produce a satisfactory diuresis.

#### ORGANIC MERCURIAL DIURETICS

Paracelsus used mercury in the treatment of edema as early as the sixteenth century. The success he achieved may be judged when we consider the extensive use of mercury for all diseases in the centuries that followed. William Stokes in 1854<sup>439</sup> again called attention to the valuable diuretic properties of mercury when he stated,

It happens again and again that the exhibition of mercury, as by enchantment, removes the anasarca.

Mercury is an ingredient of the famous Guy's pills, but its real value as a diuretic was not appreciated until the recent discovery of the less toxic organic preparations. In 1920 Saxyl and Heilig<sup>440</sup> introduced the first of these compounds, known as novasurol (merbaphen, U.S.P.) and verified the earlier statement of Stokes that mercury "as by enchantment" removes anasarca. About 1927 salyrgan (mersalyl) was introduced on the justification that it was less toxic in laboratory and clinical experiments; but the inclusion of merbaphen in the latest edition of the U.S.P. is sufficient evidence of the usefulness and safety of the older drugs. During the next year (1928) a preparation containing an organic mercurial salt combined with theophyllin was introduced by von Issekutz and von Vegh,<sup>441</sup> known as mercupurin. All these preparations are ineffective when given by mouth and must be administered intravenously or intramuscularly. Recently (1934) Engel introduced a suppository containing mercupurin without the theophyllin; this is known as *mercurin*.<sup>53, 99</sup>

**MODE OF ACTION.** The mercurial diuretics owe their therapeutic value to the fact that they ionize feebly under appropriate conditions to form

mercury ions. Although these ions have a general affinity for all proteins, their action is manifest principally on the kidney tubules, suggesting that here the body presents optimal conditions for the ionization and action of these drugs with the result that reabsorption of the glomerular filtrate is diminished, producing a tubular "diarrhea."

Experiments have demonstrated that the primary site of action of these drugs is not extrarenal. If we transplant a kidney of a novasurol-treated dog into the neck of a normal dog, we will find that the novasurol kidney excretes much more urine than the dog's other kidneys; conversely, if a normal kidney is transplanted into a novasurol-injected dog, it will excrete much less than the dog's kidneys which had been exposed to novasurol.

**TECHNIC OF ADMINISTRATION.** While three methods of administration have been proposed (intramuscularly, intravenously, and by rectal suppository), I have obtained the best results from the intravenous route. If care is used at all times in making the injections, local reactions as well as the sclerosing effects these preparations have on the veins can be prevented. **LEAKAGE INTO THE SUBCUTANEOUS TISSUES DURING INTRAVENOUS INJECTION SHOULD ALWAYS BE AVOIDED SINCE THESE AREAS ARE SUBSEQUENTLY MOST PAINFUL AND NOT INFREQUENTLY SLOUGH.**

The equipment necessary for an intravenous injection of any of these mercurial diuretics is simple and may be sterilized and carried to the bedside of the patient in a small container. Sterilization of the skin with alcohol is sufficient. With the tourniquet in place, the needle is held parallel to the veins and inserted. When the needle is completely in the vein, as shown by the column of blood entering the syringe, the tourniquet is released and the injection slowly given. In case the veins are deeper owing to the thick subcutaneous tissues, a longer needle (1 inch, 24 gauge) should be used. In patients who have excessive edema or obesity, and when other points of entry are obscured, the injection may be given successfully into a vein on the back of the hand.

The initial intravenous dose of mercupurin or salyrgan should be  $\frac{1}{2}$  cc to 1 cc. of the 10 per cent solution. Untoward reactions are rare, and subsequent doses of 2 cc. can be administered safely at intervals of three to six days. It is usually unnecessary to give the drugs at intervals of *less than three days. In cases where intravenous injection is impossible, the intramuscular route may be used. The dosage is the same. Intramuscular injections of mercupurin are best given into the upper outer quadrant of the buttock (see Fig. 92), using a 2 to 2½ inch needle of 22 gauge. Although this method is more painful, a similar diuresis is produced.*

When there is an objection on the part of the patient to parenteral therapy, suppositories may be tried, although I have not observed as satisfactory results following their use as reported by others.<sup>110</sup> However, in cases where a good diuretic response follows, suppositories have a distinct advantage, since it is then possible to give up the intravenous route—always a desirable step when another avenue of administration proves as effective. The use of suppositories means fewer visits of the patient to

the clinic or physician's office and consequently results in a saving of time and money. The suppositories are made of a cocoa butter base, and contain 500 mg. of the mercurial salt of mercupurin without the addition of theophyllin. The suppository should always be inserted in the morning after a cleansing enema, in which event absorption may be fairly rapid. Diuresis starts in one to two hours. The use of suppositories should be guided by the physician, depending on the amount of edema present and its tendency to recur. Intervals of four to six days are usually recommended.

The acid-producing salts are weaker diuretics in themselves, but have been found to augment considerably the diuresis if administered with the organic mercurial diuretics. Keith, Barrier, and Whelan<sup>182</sup> first used ammonium chloride in combination with novasurol and obtained good results when either preparation given alone was ineffective. The mechanism of this synergistic action is probably related to the pH of the glomerular filtrate. Other acid-forming salts like ammonium nitrate and calcium chloride were found to be just as effective as ammonium chloride. Administration of alkalis has been shown to reduce the diuresis. Whenever possible, the acidifying salt, ammonium chloride, is given in 1.0 Gm. (15 grains) doses after meals and at bedtime for two days before the administration of the mercurial diuretic.

**UNTOWARD EFFECTS.** The addition of these powerful agents in the form of mercurial diuretics to our therapeutic program has been a great advance. However, caution should be used in their indiscriminate use, particularly in older people. Too rapid dehydration, in some instances has been followed by extreme weakness, and not uncommonly by changes in the mental condition of these patients. They lose interest, take little food, and may at times show a tendency to an increasing stupor, leading eventually to coma. The enormous loss of sodium chloride and water from the body must be considered as one of the dangers of this form of therapy.<sup>202</sup> In addition to the weakness and thirst complained of by the patient, dry tongue, sunken features, and other signs of dehydration should be looked for. At times the chloride loss with its accompanying weakness simulates Addison's disease where a chloride deficiency likewise occurs.

The sodium ion is linked with the fundamental biochemical processes of life, and one of its chief roles is to hold water in the intercellular tissue spaces. The administration of one of the diuretic drugs causes the loss of sodium chloride from the tissues, the amount depending on the dose of the drug. Consequently, when the symptoms described above appear in any patient receiving mercurial diuretics, the usual routine therapy should be interrupted, and water and sodium chloride administered by mouth or intravenously as the occasion demands.

In the treatment of congestive failure, it is well to remember that all the procedures recommended should not be carried out during too short a period of time, for example, thoracentesis, abdominal tap, diuresis and phlebotomy. This is particularly true in aged patients. I have seen weakness and collapse follow "too much doctoring," a state of affairs similar to

that produced by the repeated bleedings of our "fathers of old." It is wise "to make haste slowly," and not try all the drugs in the saddle bag during the first 24 hours.

It is not my purpose to arouse any apprehension on the part of the physician in regard to the mercurial diuretics. No great concern should attend their daily use in practice when definitely indicated if the above precautionary measures are followed. In very sick patients, particularly those who suffer from attacks of paroxysmal cardiac dyspnea (cardiac asthma), all intravenous injections should be made slowly. It might be well in some cases to dilute the drug to 10 cc. with normal saline solution. However, if not less than three minutes are allowed for the injection, most of the organic mercurial diuretics may be used undiluted in the average patient. Injections of mercurials may be given at the usual intervals over the course of many years with no untoward effects, as accumulating reports in the literature point out (page 113). Rare cases have shown a renal mercurial poisoning,<sup>417</sup> but I have never seen this occur. Post mortem examinations of the kidneys of patients who have been receiving many injections show no toxic change.<sup>29</sup>

**INDICATIONS FOR MERCURIAL DIURETICS.** Cardiac edema is the chief indication for the use of these drugs. At times when the administration of digitalis is not tolerated (page 107), the organic mercurials hold a place of prime importance in the schedule of therapy.

In certain types of dyspnea, particularly the nocturnal variety, much can be gained from the use of the mercurial diuretics. These attacks of nocturnal dyspnea which frequently complicate left ventricular failure may be prevented by the routine administration of the mercurial diuretics. I have seen this beneficial result occur even when edema was not in evidence (page 109).

I believe that the mercurial diuretic group has likewise helped to provide a "lengthn'd day" for the cardiac patient who was previously incapacitated at an earlier date by persisting edema. If edema remains after the full exhibition of digitalis in patients with regular rhythm, the mercurials form the sheet anchor in therapy in any type of heart disease. Mercurial diuretics likewise have a place in the edema of nephrosis, where the kidneys can excrete urine of a specific gravity of 1.016 or over and where evidence of acute nephritis is absent.

Ascites resulting from both cardiac and noncardiac causes calls for the trial of the mercurial group. In these cases the result will usually not be as dramatic as is seen when edema fluid is removed from other locations, particularly where the ascites is secondary to hepatic disease. After an initial abdominal tapping, the routine use of a mercurial diuretic may make the repetition of this procedure unnecessary, or it may markedly increase the interval between tapings (Case 7).

**CONTRAINDICATIONS.** Hematuria seems to be the sole contraindication to the use of mercurial diuretics, according to some authorities.<sup>153</sup> However, caution should always be used in older patients, especially in the presence

of cachexia, fever, enteritis, or colitis, and hemiplegia. Where local rectal conditions (inflamed or thrombosed hemorrhoids, rectal fissures) are present, the use of the suppositories is contraindicated. Care should be taken to prevent spontaneous redigitalization following administration of mercurial diuretics (page 113).

**PREPARATIONS.** **MERBAPHEN U.S.P.** or **novasurol** is a compound of mercury with barbitol. It contains about 34 per cent mercury and is marketed in ampules containing 1 and 2 cc. of a 10 per cent solution.

**SALYRGAN** or **mersalyl** is a fine crystalline powder containing not less than 37.6 per cent of mercury in poorly ionizable form. Ampules containing 1 or 2 cc. of a 10 per cent solution are obtainable. Salyrgan has been recently modified and now is reported to consist of a "complex compound of mercury and sodium salicyl-allyl-amino-o-acetate in a five per cent theophyllin solution."

**MERCUPURIN** is marketed in ampules each containing a 10 per cent aqueous solution of the preparation. One cc. contains the equivalent of about 39 mg. of mercury in poorly ionizable form. The theophyllin in mercupurin is chemically bound to the mercury atom. Mercupurin is supplied in 1.1 cc. and 2.2 cc. ampules.

**MERCURIN SUPPOSITORIES.** Each suppository contains 0.5 Gm. mercurin, equivalent to about 0.2 Gm. of mercury, or approximately two and one-half times the amount of mercury contained in 2.2 cc. of the parenterally administered mercurial diuretics. It is supplied in boxes containing five and 25 suppositories.

**ESIDRONE**<sup>280, 281</sup> is a stable, neutral, crystalline substance which is easily soluble in water. It contains 31.2 per cent mercury in nonionizable form, and 28.0 per cent theophyllin which is chemically connected with the mercury atom. Generally 1 cc. of Esidrone administered intravenously or intramuscularly (never subcutaneously) produces gratifying results although 1.5 cc. or 2.0 cc. may be administered with comparative safety. Esidrone may be given one, two, or even three times per week. It is marketed in ampules of 1 cc. (1 cc. equals 0.14 Gm. Esidrone equals 0.043 Gm. mercury). Each ampule contains sufficient amount to allow withdrawal and administration of 1 cc.

## MECHANICAL THERAPEUTIC MEASURES

**Venesection.** A better understanding of the use of digitalis and the discovery of the effectiveness of organic mercurial diuretics have forced one of the oldest of therapeutic procedures almost into the discard. Although previously advised in every disorder to which the human flesh is heir, blood letting is now practiced only in the presence of venous hypertension that follows right ventricular failure. In these acute episodes the relief obtained following the withdrawal of 500 to 600 cc. of blood is at times dramatic.

The procedure of venesection itself usually offers no difficulty. A needle of large caliber is preferable, and care should be used in applying the

tourniquet in order that the blood flow in the artery is not shut off. An inflated blood pressure cuff makes a convenient tourniquet for ordinary purposes. In emergencies a longitudinal incision into the vein serves just as well as venous puncture. The amount of blood to withdraw depends on the clinical condition of the patient and is often not as important as the speed with which it is removed. Usually observations of the neck veins furnish a rough gauge of the height of the venous pressure, but before venesection is repeated, a more exact estimation should be made whenever possible (page 54). "Bloodless" venesection produced by placing tourniquets

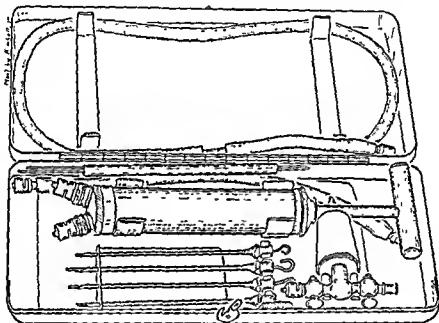
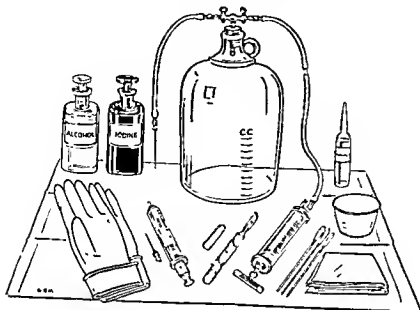


FIG. 42. Thoracentesis outfit (Potain).

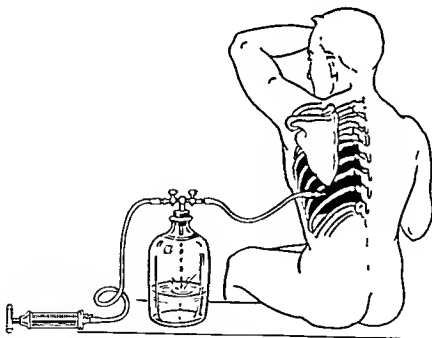
on the arms and legs close to the trunk does not give the same fall in venous pressure in cardiac failure.

*Thoracentesis.* *Digitalis* and *diuretics*, although often efficient in preventing the accumulation of fluid in the pleural cavities, usually fail to remove large collections present when the patient is first seen. These require drainage, inasmuch as they reduce the vital capacity and increase the amount of dyspnea. Properly carried out, thoracentesis should cause the patient very little discomfort.

I prefer the Potain apparatus (Fig. 42) that enables the removal of the fluid by a closed (siphonage) system. A tightly fitting rubber stopcock is essential for success of this method. One outlet is attached to the aspirating needle; the other to a small suction pump. A vacuum is first created in the bottle by closing the stopcock leading to the needle and pumping out the air. With the patient sitting up in bed (Fig. 43), the site for puncture is



A



B

FIG. 43. Thoracentesis.  
A. Essential equipment.  
B. Technic of procedure.



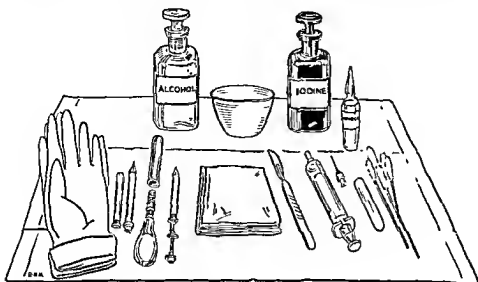
carefully selected (usually the eighth or ninth interspace in the posterior axillary line) and sterilized with iodine and alcohol. Satisfactory local anesthesia is produced by infiltration of the skin and deeper structures with a 1 per cent procaine hydrochloride solution. A small 26-gauge needle should be used for the skin and subcutaneous tissues and then changed to a one and one-half inch length of the same gauge when anesthetizing the deeper structures down to the pleura. The needle used for the tap should not have too long or too sharp a point in order to avoid puncturing the lung and producing a pneumothorax. This danger, with ordinary care, is remote. A small incision previously made in the anesthetized skin with a scalpel allows an easier and more deliberate entry of the needle into the chest. Before inserting the needle, the suction in the bottle should be tested by using sterile water, taking care to turn the stopcock on the side of the needle to the open position and to close the stopcock leading to the hand pump.

The amount that can be safely withdrawn from the pleural cavity varies in each instance. As much should be taken as possible without producing untoward symptoms. During a thoracentesis, the patient should be carefully watched for increase in dyspnea, cough, faintness or tachycardia. Nausea, vomiting, pulmonary edema and the so-called pleural shock are possibilities but are rare (or else I have been fortunate). When the lung can be felt coming down and striking the end of the needle, or if the patient begins to cough, it is well to stop the procedure. Withdraw the needle and seal the puncture with collodion. A fall in the venous pressure may indicate improvement even after the withdrawal of as little as 400 cc. It is well not to withdraw amounts in excess of 1000 cc. at one time.

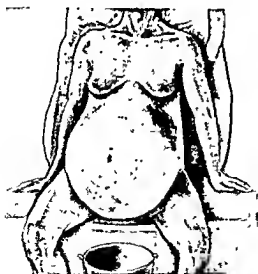
**Abdominal Paracentesis.** Small collections in the peritoneal cavity usually show better response to diuretics than thoracic collections, owing to the fact that the peritoneum is a better absorbing surface than the pleura. An advanced degree of ascites may be present in chronic congestive failure, but chronic constrictive pericarditis usually produces the largest collections. If the ascites interferes with breathing, it should be removed after the pleural collections have been successfully drained.

The technic of abdominal paracentesis is simple, and there is no contra-indication to performing the operation in the home. Before proceeding, it is essential to have the patient empty the bladder. Figure 44A shows the minimum equipment required. The operation is carried out best with the patient sitting on a chair or on the edge of the bed. A firm satisfactory back rest should be obtained (Fig. 44B). The legs are separated and a large rubber sheet or piece of oil cloth fitted around them. A household bucket is placed between the feet. The skin area below the umbilicus is sterilized in the usual manner with iodine and alcohol (taking care to protect the genitalia), and the site of puncture midway between the umbilicus and the symphysis selected. This area is infiltrated with one per cent procaine hydrochloride solution using a 26-gauge needle and followed by injection of the deeper areas using a 24-gauge, 1½ inch needle. A small incision

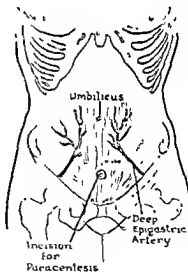
through the superficial tissues is made with a scalpel. This point in the technic is important and if carried out will give the patient less discomfort



A



B



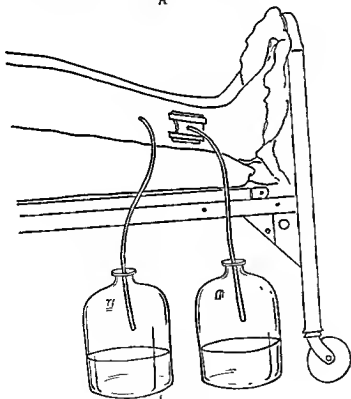
C

FIG. 44. Abdominal paracentesis.  
A. Essential equipment.  
B. Position of patient.  
C. Anatomic landmarks.

when the trocar is inserted. The incision should be large enough to accommodate the trocar which is gradually forced into the abdominal cavity by a series of controlled, rotary movements. When the cannula is removed



A



B

FIG. 45. Southey's Tubes.

A. Essential equipment.

B. Tubes in place in subcutaneous tissues.

from the inside of the trocar, the column of fluid escapes from the end as a jet and can be directed toward the bucket. Abdominal paracentesis usually causes no discomfort. The withdrawal may be momentarily checked by reinserting the cannula into the trocar, taking care to follow aseptic technic continually. If the flow of ascitic fluid stops suddenly, this same procedure should be employed to displace small pieces of omentum that block the end of the trocar. After all the fluid has been withdrawn, a sterile dressing is placed over the wound and an abdominal binder applied. Following abdominal paracentesis, it is a good practice to keep the patient in bed until the next day.

**Southey's Tubes.** Cases will rarely be met where digitalis and diuretics fail to make an impression on a chronic edema of large proportions. In such instances, Southey's tubes may be inserted. These are small hollow cannulas 5 cm. in length and 3 mm. in width, with a series of openings in the walls (Fig. 45). A point on the outer aspect of each leg about two inches above the ankle is anesthetized with procaine hydrochloride, and the cannulas are inserted on a small trocar that is withdrawn as soon as the cannulas are in place. Sterile rubber tubes leading to bottles attached to the side of the bed are now tied on the end of the cannulas, using a fine silk thread. The sides of the tubes are kept clean and are surrounded by sterile gauze. Occasionally large amounts of fluid (four or five liters in 24 hours) may be drained from the tissues in cases of severe congestive failure by the use of this method.

## OXYGEN THERAPY

In the uncomplicated case of chronic cardiac failure, oxygen deficiency, as determined by an estimation of the degree of saturation of the arterial blood, is not present; consequently the administration of oxygen is of no value. Where there are pulmonary complications (emphysema, edema, infection, infarction) or in cases of coronary occlusion, a diminished oxygen saturation may exist, in which event, the inhalation of high concentrations may be most beneficial. It has been shown by Barach and his associates<sup>12, 13, 16</sup> that oxygen in some cases of cardiac failure relieves the dyspnea and cyanosis, slows the pulse, promotes diuresis, and diminishes edema. This effect may be noted three hours after inhaling an atmosphere containing 45 per cent of oxygen. Some of these patients when returned to an atmosphere containing a normal amount of oxygen have been reported to show a decreased urinary output and a return of the edema. If again placed in the tent, a second diuresis often follows. As a rule, cases of heart failure where an acute rheumatic process exists do not show the same speedy response to oxygen therapy as the arteriosclerotic type.

The use of oxygen therapy combined with thyroidectomy for various types of heart disease<sup>17</sup> has been suggested by Barach and his associates. Intensive treatment in an oxygen tent preceding and following operation

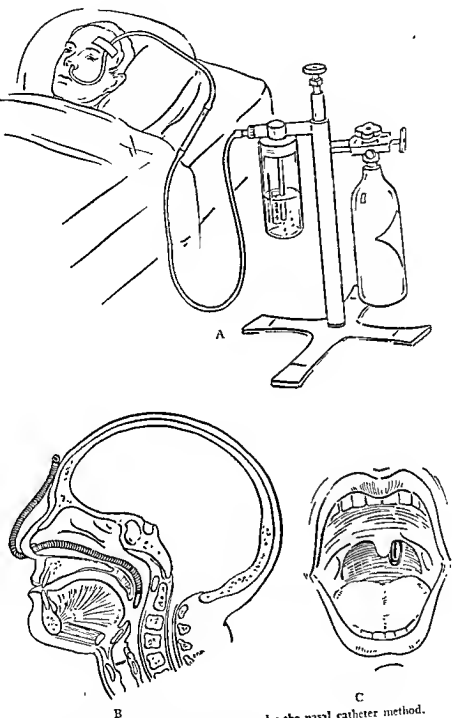


FIG. 46. The administration of oxygen by the nasal catheter method.  
A. Bedside apparatus. Catheter in place.  
B. Side view showing position of catheter.  
C. Position of catheter in nasopharynx.

makes full use of the effect of an atmosphere rich in oxygen on circulatory function.

Cyanosis and dyspnea are the most reliable guides to the use of oxygen therapy in the presence of congestive failure with pulmonary complications. Cyanosis and cardiac pain serve in the same capacity in cases of coronary occlusion.

In congestive failure, it is my impression that variable results follow the use of oxygen. In some cases the cyanosis may clear up, but the dyspnea may remain unrelieved, while in other cases both symptoms may show a gradual improvement.

Levy and Barach<sup>45</sup> have shown that oxygen in acute coronary occlusion is of decided benefit. Here inhalation of a 50 per cent mixture supports the heart damaged by anoxemia and consequently relieves the pain. A 50 per cent oxygen mixture is recommended in the average case, although a 70 per cent mixture can be used if marked anoxemia is present. The high concentrations of oxygen (80 to 100 per cent) are apt to cause pulmonary irritation if long continued, while the concentrations below 50 per cent do not have the same beneficial effect.

**Methods of Administration.** The simplest method to administer oxygen efficiently is by means of the nasal catheter. The entire equipment consists of a cylinder of oxygen, a suitable regulating valve, a humidifier, and catheter with connecting tubing (Fig. 46A). The supervision requires no special training, and the oxygen concentration delivered to the patient compares favorably with the more expensive equipments. Care must be taken to place the catheter correctly in the oropharynx. Rovenstine<sup>323</sup> suggests that the distance between the external nares and the tragus of the ear ( $4\frac{1}{2}$  to  $5\frac{1}{2}$  inches) be measured on the patient and marked on the catheter before it is inserted. A good supply of olive oil or cottonseed oil is applied to the catheter, and with the oxygen flowing, this is introduced slowly through the nares to the mark previously mentioned (Fig. 46B). If pushed beyond this point, the stimulation produced will usually cause the patient to make swallowing movements. The catheter is then withdrawn slightly to the point where deglutition does not occur and fastened in place (Fig. 46C). A fresh catheter should be inserted at least every 12 hours, and the nostrils used alternately. A flow of oxygen of five to six liters per minute gives an alveolar concentration of 50 to 60 per cent. With the flow cut down to four liters per minute, a 30 to 40 per cent alveolar air concentration is obtained. Barach believes<sup>9</sup> that the nasal catheter method of administering oxygen in the absence of a tent is the most efficient and recommends a flow of five liters per minute.

Various types of small masks for oxygen are on the market.<sup>50, 51</sup> The mask designed by Boothby, Lovelace, and Bulbulian<sup>26, 43, 234</sup> is efficient and satisfactory, and where co-operation can be obtained from the patient, most economical (Fig. 47C). Enough moisture remains in the mask from the wearer's exhaled air to provide for a sufficiently high and comfortable

humidity. The disadvantage of the use of the mask is the interruption necessary for frequent feedings.

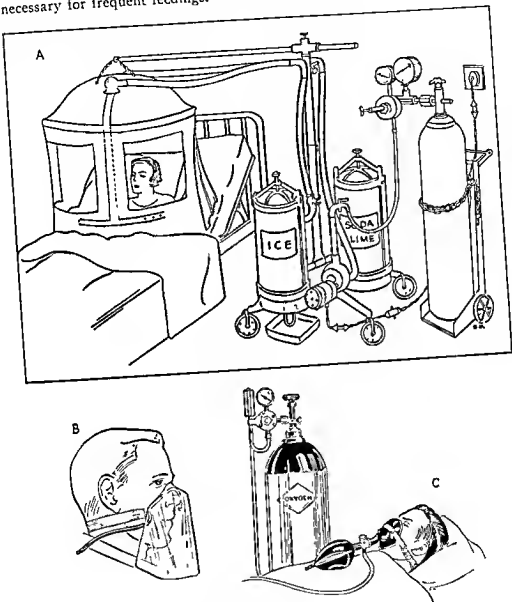


FIG 47. The administration of oxygen.

A. Oxygen tent.

B. Small oxygen face tent.

C. Face mask (Courtesy Ohio Chemical & Manufacturing Company).

A small oxygen face tent has been designed by Barach,<sup>10</sup> which is inexpensive and more comfortable than the nasal catheter. It is easy to remove and reapply with immediate building up to the oxygen concen-

tration desired. The material is transparent and light and may be comfortably molded to the face (Fig. 47B).

The administration of oxygen concentrations between 50 and 70 per cent over long periods can be carried out most comfortably and efficiently by the use of the oxygen tent (Fig. 47A). The observations of temperature and the humidity that are necessary require the services of a special nurse or attendant; consequently this equipment lends itself best to hospital usage. In this apparatus the carbon dioxide is removed from the air by soda lime, and ice is needed for the cooling system.

It has been shown that subcutaneous administration of oxygen does not materially affect the oxygen content or the percentage of oxygen saturation of the arterial blood.

Barach<sup>14</sup> has diluted oxygen with helium gas and successfully employed the mixture in patients suffering from severe asthma and in conditions associated with obstruction of the upper air passages (see Chapter 16). Helium is a lighter gas, and the helium-oxygen mixture requires considerably less effort to breathe than air and oxygen.

A thorough understanding of the technic of the various methods of oxygen administration is essential for success. The regulation of the apparatus should never be left to an uninstructed nurse or attendant. Physicians unfamiliar with the details of this method of therapy should either not employ it or else should call in consultation a colleague who understands both the errors of technic and the advantages of the procedure. In arranging the patient in a tent, it is well to keep in mind that the mattress is pervious to oxygen; consequently a rubber sheet should cover the mattress, and the patient should be carefully tucked in if the efficiency of the method is to be maintained. The tent should be of non-diffusing material and should be kept in good condition at all times. Leaks reduce efficiency and are expensive. It is well to remember that there is only one kind of oxygen used, industrial oxygen. There is no special "medical oxygen."

## TOTAL THYROIDECTOMY

Total ablation of the thyroid gland was first proposed by Blumgart and his associates<sup>24</sup> in 1933 as an aid in a carefully selected group of patients suffering from congestive cardiac failure or angina pectoris. The scientific basis for this new form of therapy is logical and remains unassailable, although the results in many cases have been disappointing.

The heart has increased work to do in the presence of an elevation of the basal metabolic rate. If this rate is purposely lowered to the myxedema level, less work is required of a heart already showing evidence of reaching the limit of its functional capacity by the presence of congestive failure or angina. The margin provided by the operation may enable the patient to be about again without recurrence of the symptoms of edema or chest pain on slight exertion. Although it was a well-known clinical fact that



patients with heart disease and thyrotoxicosis showed considerable cardiac improvement after subtotal thyroidectomy, it remained for Blumgart and his colleagues to recommend the removal of the normal thyroid.

Patients must be carefully selected, not by the surgeon but by the internist only after careful study, if successful results are to be obtained. Operation should never be considered until a medical regime has been given a fair trial in competent hands. Cases are few where digitalization and the use of one of the mercurial diuretics combined with bed rest and diet do not produce marked improvement in all the symptoms of congestive failure. The operation is recommended for the small group who remain comfortable under appropriate therapy at bed rest, but when the slightest increase in activity is allowed, show prompt recurrence of symptoms. It must also be kept in mind that the operation that provides this added amount of exercise tolerance is not without its risks. Likewise, where the cardiac lesion has given evidence of its tendency to progress rapidly in patients with coronary arteriosclerosis, syphilitic aortitis, renal complications or in some patients who already have a low basal metabolic rate, nothing is to be gained by attempting thyroid ablation. Consequently it is evident that the number of cases benefited by the operation is still further decreased. White<sup>293</sup> estimates that 1 per cent of all the patients routinely seen for congestive failure or angina pectoris will ultimately prove suitable for the procedure of total thyroidectomy.

In addition to the care necessary in the selection of the patient, it is most important to obtain a surgeon experienced in the technic of the thyroid operation, if fatalities are to be reduced to a minimum. The after care of the patient calls for regulation of the myxedematous state. The medical regime of digitalis and diuretics is continued and thyroid extract is added, if required, to maintain the basal metabolic rate at about a minus 30 per cent.

### FOLLOW-UP TREATMENT

When the signs of congestion vanish, and the patient is again ambulatory, the physician's work is by no means finished. He may have recognized very quickly the signs and symptoms of cardiac failure and treated them promptly and efficiently to the great satisfaction of the patient and his family, but the task is not completed until the etiology of the heart condition has been determined. The patient's future can then be more intelligently planned.

In some cases discovery of the etiology will be an easy matter, in others difficult. At the time of the initial examination of the patient, valuable points may have been gathered from the past history, for example, several attacks of rheumatic fever, or a long history of hypertension or angina. On examination, increase in the blood pressure, signs of hyperthyroidism, certain characteristic murmurs, changes in rhythm, pulsations, bulgings or retractions of the thorax, or other evidences point-

ing to the nature of the underlying cardiac lesion may have been discovered (Chapter 1).

When the etiologic background is established, the physician is in a position to give advice in regard to the probable future course of the disease. For example, patients with rheumatic heart disease, particularly if auricular fibrillation is present at the onset of congestive failure, usually respond promptly to treatment and may show no recurrence of failure for a number of years, provided digitalis and diuretic drugs are properly administered. The same may be said concerning cases of hypertension. If the initial failure is regarded as a warning, and co-operation obtained, these patients may do very well for some time. The same optimistic outlook cannot be held where syphilitic heart disease is shown to be the cause of the failure. Here initial improvement may take place following the usual regime of treatment, but it does not last, and a poor prognosis must be given. The same may be said of patients where frequent coronary occlusions have greatly reduced the myocardial reserve. A small number of cases will be seen where prompt recognition of the cause of the congestive failure may result in complete restoration of circulatory function for an indefinite period (pages 182, 556).

The type of patient we are dealing with many times has a definite bearing on prognosis. If intelligent and co-operative, the outlook is improved; for modern methods of management have much to offer. The station in life may likewise affect the future in that the type of work to which the patient returns after the breakdown may precipitate another attack. However, I do not believe that complete rest for an indefinite period is the best treatment for working people. The issue has often been settled for me by the patient when I have been in doubt about the ability to return to a previous occupation. Of necessity the head of the house returns to mill or factory, or the housewife to her household duties and the care of her children. Mild grades of congestive failure have reappeared in some cases, but even so, I have been surprised at what could be accomplished by these patients in spite of this handicap.

The frequency of congestive failure as a cause of death in heart disease has shown a decided drop during the past decade, for the newer methods of treatment enable us to keep cardiac patients edema-free. Williams and Rainey,<sup>403</sup> comparing the incidence of congestive failure in patients from their files who died between 1931 and 1935 with a similar series between the years of 1926 and 1930, found that congestive failure accounted for 31 per cent of the deaths in the early group, while it accounted for only 18 per cent in the 1931-1935 series. Their figures, in addition, show that the duration of life after the onset of symptoms has, in recent years, been distinctly prolonged. This reflects the value of the modern treatment of congestive failure.

In the following cases, problems of management of congestive failure will be reviewed. The treatment of the etiologic types of heart disease

that are represented here has been considered under other chapter headings.

## ILLUSTRATIVE CASES

### HYPERTENSIVE CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE COMPLICATED BY CONGESTIVE CARDIAC FAILURE

**Case 4.** Miss E. M., a housekeeper of 57, was first seen 1/22/36 complaining of dyspnea, edema and vomiting. Four weeks before there was marked increase in dyspnea followed by edema of the feet, worse toward evening. She was forced to remain in bed on 1/21/36 because of dyspnea. Vomiting began the same day and when examined, the patient was unable to retain even fluids by mouth. The past medical history was negative. The family history revealed that her mother died at the age of 70 of hypertensive heart disease.

**PHYSICAL EXAMINATION.** B P 130/100 Pulse 130. Rhythm totally irregular. Cyanosis and dyspnea were present. The heart was enlarged to the left: L.B. 13.6 cm., R.B. 3.0 cm. There was a blowing systolic murmur of moderate intensity present over the mitral area. The right chest posteriorly showed flatness as far as the angle of the

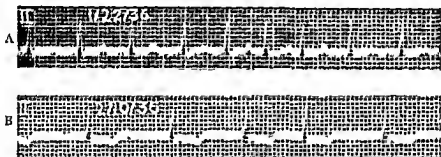


FIG. 48 A. Auricular fibrillation Ventricular rate 150

B. Following digitalization. Note the depression of the S-T Intervals and the greatly reduced ventricular rate.

scapula. The liver was enlarged 6 cm. below the right costal margin. No ascites. Edema of the legs was present.

**LABORATORY DATA.** The electrocardiogram (Fig. 48) showed auricular fibrillation with a rapid ventricular rate. Urinalysis: light cloud of albumin, specific gravity, 1.022, no sugar and an occasional red blood cell.

**CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS.** A. Etiologic: Hypertension. B. Anatomic: Cardiac hypertrophy. C. Physiologic: Auricular fibrillation. Congestive cardiac failure. D. Functional Classification: Class 4. Therapeutic Classification: Class E.

**Discussion.** This clinical picture is frequently encountered. Although the systolic blood pressure was not elevated when the patient was first examined, the diastolic level showed a suspicious increase. The presence of cardiac enlargement, the family history of hypertension and the age of the patient were additional factors of importance in establishing the etiologic diagnosis. We may surmise from the history that early left ventricular failure was present four weeks before the patient was compelled to remain in bed. Failure of both ventricles was evident when she was first examined.

Treatment was begun with an injection of morphine sulfate, 15 mg. ( $\frac{1}{4}$  grain). Because of the cyanosis, dyspnea, and tense jugular veins, a venesection was performed and 600 cc. of blood was quickly withdrawn. Following this, the venous engorgement was visibly improved, and the patient felt better.

Vomiting was the next problem that demanded attention. No medication had been previously taken. This removed the possibility of vomiting as a result of digitalis toxic action. In patients showing such marked clinical evidence of venous engorgement, vomiting usually arises secondary to the congestion of the entire gastro-intestinal tract.

Since it was impossible to give digitalis by mouth when the patient was first seen, the rectal route was chosen. After a cleansing enema, 8 cc. of digitan (equivalent to 0.75 Gm. [12 grains] of the whole leaf of digitalis) were given through a tube and washed in with one ounce of tap water. For the next 12 hours, nothing but cracked ice in small quantities was allowed. The next day, the vomiting had stopped, diuresis had started, and the patient felt much improved. Oral administration of digitalis was therefore begun, and one tablet, 0.1 Gm. ( $1\frac{1}{2}$  grains) of the whole leaf was given every four hours. The pulse on the second day was still irregular, but the rate had dropped to 90 beats per minute. A Karell diet (page 548) was prescribed and was well tolerated. The vomiting did not recur.

Since some edema was still present on the fourth day, 1 cc. of mercupurin was given intravenously, and at the same time the digitalis dosage was cut to 0.1 Gm. ( $1\frac{1}{2}$  grains) twice daily, inasmuch as the pulse rate had dropped to 80. The diet was increased and the fluid allowance raised to 2000 cc. daily. On the sixth day the pulse was 70, consequently the digitalis dose was lowered to maintenance, 0.1 Gm. ( $1\frac{1}{2}$  grains) daily. The blood pressure at this time was 180/100, confirming the original impression concerning the etiology. This increase was not regarded as an alarming sign. The blood pressure, with restoration of circulatory efficiency, had merely returned to its previous level.

At the beginning of the second week, a regular diet was prescribed and the patient was allowed to sit in a chair beside the bed. There was no evidence of edema; dyspnea did not reappear, and the pulse rate was 75 and irregular. In the presence of cardiac enlargement and congestive failure, no attempt was made to restore normal rhythm. Auricular fibrillation was accepted and the ventricular rate controlled by maintenance doses of digitalis. These patients, rheumatic or hypertensive, get along better with an established fibrillation than they do if attempts are made to restore co-ordinated auricular contractions. Restoration of sinus rhythm by quinidine materially increases the possibilities of embolism from clots that may be swept away from the auricular walls.

Three weeks later this patient was able to carry out lighter duties of the household. The heavier work, that had been largely responsible for precipitating the attack of congestive failure, was turned over to a part-

time maid. Rest periods were continued in the afternoon. The patient was permitted to take short walks on the level out-of-doors on clear days, and social activities were encouraged. Since she enjoyed sewing and was skilled in certain types of needlework, she managed in time to obtain enough work from her neighbors to pay for the services of the maid.

#### HYPERTENSIVE CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE. CONGESTIVE FAILURE AND CARDIAC ASTHMA IN A PATIENT ABNORMALLY SENSITIVE TO DIGITALIS AND MORPHINE

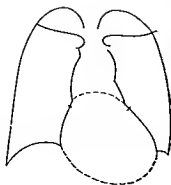
**Case 5.** Mrs. R. M., an American housewife of 53, was first seen in January, 1937, complaining of severe chest pain. Previously she had received treatment over the course of five years for hypertension. The main symptoms complained of during this time were vertigo, and palpitation ("skipping of the heart").

**PHYSICAL EXAMINATION** When the first examination was made, severe chest pain had been present for 24 hours, requiring two hypodermic injections of morphine for relief. Nevertheless, her condition was excellent. B.P. 170/100. T. 98° F. The pulse was 80 and regular. The skin was warm and dry, and the color was good. An electrocardiogram showed no evidence of coronary occlusion. The cause of the chest pain was evident the next morning when a typical herpetic eruption appeared (Fig. 49B).

A subsequent study showed that the heart was enlarged to the left (Fig. 49A). Systolic murmurs were present over the mitral and aortic areas. The aortic second sound was accentuated. An electrocardiogram showed frequent premature beats (Fig. 49C) and alterations in the T-waves consistent with the diagnosis of hypertensive heart disease. The blood Wassermann reaction was negative. Several blood counts and urinalyses showed no departure from the normal.

**CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS** A. Etiologic Hypertension B. Anatomic Cardiac hypertrophy. Relative mitral insufficiency. C. Physiologic. Frequent premature ventricular contractions. D. Functional Classification Class I. Therapeutic Classification Class C.

**Discussion.** Before the appearance of the skin eruption, a diagnosis of acute coronary occlusion had been made. This alarmed the patient, and the pain that persisted following the healing of the eruption also contributed to a rapid down-hill course. When re-examined three months later, the heart was found to be increased in size, and dyspnea was present on less exertion. Two months later, when evening edema began to appear, digitalis was prescribed. The first dose of the drug consisted of a tablet, 0.1 Gm. (1½ grains) of the whole leaf. This was promptly vomited. Repetition of half the dose two days later had the same effect. A week later the drug was again administered, disguised in a colored capsule. This time the vomiting lasted two days, and the edema and dyspnea increased to such an extent that bed rest became necessary. A capsule containing phenobarbital, 30 mg. (½ grain) and theobromine sodium acetate, 0.3 Gm. (5 grains) given after meals was well tolerated. At the end of a week of complete bed rest, the first typical attack of cardiac asthma occurred. Although a hypodermic injection of morphine sulfate, 15 mg. (¼ grain) brought prompt relief, it was followed by a severe vomiting that continued for two days. When this was controlled, attacks of nocturnal dyspnea again returned and were more severe. The patient's condition during one of these attacks made the use of morphine again a necessity. Vomiting promptly reappeared and the usual measures including gastric lavage were entirely ineffectual in lessening its severity.



A



B



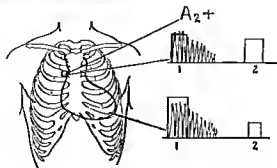
C

FIG 49. A. The orthodiagram. Note cardiac enlargement (chiefly left ventricular). The right upper cardiac border is formed by the ascending arch. Systolic pulsations were visible in this region.

B. The appearance of the precordial region two days after the onset of chest pain.

C. The electrocardiogram. Note frequent ventricular premature beats. The voltage of the QRS groups is increased. T-2 is diphasic and T-3 is flat. Left axis deviation is present.

D. Diagram representing clinical findings.



D

However, the large amount of fluid lost in the vomitus, in addition to the greatly restricted intake during this period, appeared to decrease the frequency of the attacks of cardiac asthma. Consequently, although no edema was visible on physical examination, injections of mercupurin were tried. Following a satisfactory response to 1 cc. intravenously, the amount was increased to 2 cc. with excellent results. Attacks of cardiac asthma did not recur after mercupurin injections were begun.

A series of 62 injections of mercupurin have now been given during the past 18 months. Although the patient has been confined to her room by the greatly diminished cardiac reserve, she has been entirely comfortable and free of paroxysmal dyspnea. The only additional medication given during this period has been ammonium chloride in enteric coated pills, 1.0 Gm. (15 grains) after meals and a capsule of phenobarbital, 60 mg. (1 grain) at night. No untoward effects of the mercupurin have been observed. The cardiac signs during this time have remained unchanged. The rhythm has been more regular and a ventricular rate of 80 has been maintained.

This patient is a good example of the progress that has been made in recent years in the treatment of congestive failure. In some cases control of the fluid balance of the body through the use of the organic mercurial preparations gives relief, even though the accumulation of edema fluid is not evident on clinical examination. Future studies are awaited to reveal the mechanism involved in this process.

#### SYPHILITIC HEART DISEASE—SUDDEN DEATH DURING FIRST ATTACK OF CONGESTIVE FAILURE—AUTOPSY

**Case 6.** E. R., a colored laborer of 40, was admitted to the Philadelphia General Hospital on 5/4/26. The chief complaints were shortness of breath and swelling of the legs and abdomen. The patient dated the onset of his illness four months before admission when dyspnea on exertion first appeared. This increased and was followed by cough. Hemoptysis was present on three occasions. Six weeks before admission edema of the feet was noted in the evening. It gradually became more marked involving the thighs, and finally the abdomen. The dyspnea had increased to orthopnea on admission. The patient gave a history of chancre at the age of 25, for which no treatment had been received.

**PHYSICAL EXAMINATION.** B.P. 183/28. Orthopnea. Anasarca. Distention of neck veins. Pulsating arteries in neck and arms. The apex beat was in the fifth interspace in the anterior axillary line. Systolic and diastolic thrills were palpable in the third and fourth interspaces, 1.5 cm. to the left of the sternal margin. The first sound of the heart heard over the apex was accentuated. The aortic second sound was absent and was replaced by a long, loud diastolic murmur. A loud systolic murmur was heard over the aortic area, transmitted to the arteries of the neck. Over the third and fourth left interspaces there was a loud, rasping murmur. The abdomen was tense and a fluid wave was present. A pistol-shot sound was heard over both femorals.

**LABORATORY DATA.** Wassermann, four plus. Blood urea nitrogen: 75 mg. per cent. The urine revealed a faint trace of albumin. The electrocardiogram showed no abnormality except a left axis deviation. The roentgen examination showed cardiac enlargement with aortic configuration. There was no sign of aneurysm.

**DIAGNOSIS.** A. Etiologic: Syphilis. B. Anatomic: Cardiac enlargement. Aortic regurgitation. Aortitis. Aneurysm (?). C. Physiologic: Normal sinus rhythm. Congestive cardiac failure. D. Functional Classification: Class 4. Therapeutic Classification: Class E.



FIG. 50 Syphilitic cardiovascular disease.

A. Increased cupping of the aortic leaflets is present. A sacculation appears behind the anterior leaflet. At this site an aneurysm projects into the pulmonary artery.

B The Pulmonary Artery. The point of rupture of the aneurysmal sac is seen. Note the area of thickening on the wall opposite point of rupture. (Autopsy No. 17,193, Philadelphia General Hospital.)



**COURSE.** The patient failed to show any improvement following digitalis and diuretic therapy and died suddenly on the third hospital day.

**AUTOPSY.** Marked cardiac enlargement and dilatation were found (Fig. 50A). There was increased cupping of all the aortic leaflets. The anterior leaflet showed a more marked change with sacculation to the size of a marble in the lower half. The base of this sac was ruptured. The adjacent tissue of the aortic leaflet was sacculated to the size of a pigeon egg and projected into the pulmonary artery (Fig. 50B). The wall of the pulmonary artery opposite the perforation was roughened, probably the result of the blood gushing through the opening. In the anterior wall of the descending portion of the aorta there was a small sacculated aneurysm containing a moderate amount of laminated clot.

**Discussion.** The treatment of cardiac failure following syphilitic cardiovascular disease does not differ from that recommended in other types. The prognosis, however, is far more serious in syphilis when symptoms develop to the extent that were observed in this patient on admission. Survival of the rheumatic or hypertensive patient for some time following one or more episodes of congestive failure is not unusual. On the other hand, while a fairly good state of health may be maintained by the patient who has syphilitic aortic regurgitation, when signs of circulatory failure can be detected clinically, the end of the road is not distant. Sudden death may be expected, however, at any point in the course of the disease. Valvular or aneurysmal dilatations with subsequent rupture and the establishment of an intrathoracic arteriovenous aneurysm may precipitate the terminal episode of congestive failure in some instances as demonstrated in this case.

Intravenous arsenical preparations are contraindicated in the management of these patients, while the heavy metals should be withheld until the evidences of congestive failure disappear. This patient received no treatment, either for his syphilis or his cardiac condition, until three days before death. When he entered the hospital, the prognosis was hopeless. Earlier recognition of the cardiac involvement followed by intensive specific treatment would undoubtedly have delayed the onset of congestive failure many years.

#### RHEUMATIC HEART DISEASE—STENOSIS AND REGURGITATION AT ALL VALVULAR ORIFICES—CONGESTIVE FAILURE OF EXCEPTIONALLY LONG DURATION

**Case 7.** Mrs. B. K., a housewife of 49, when first examined in June, 1933, presented the typical picture of congestive failure. Circulatory symptoms had appeared four years prior to the initial examination, and the patient had been admitted on three occasions to local hospitals for treatment of congestive failure. There was a history of three attacks of rheumatic fever in childhood.

**PHYSICAL EXAMINATION** showed a thin adult female sitting up in bed. There was a trace of icterus. The jugulars were turgid (Fig. 51D). Orthopnea was present. Inspiratory rales were heard over both lung bases. The heart was enlarged to percussion. The left border was readily detected in the anterior axillary line, and the right border was percussed 6 cm. to the right of the midsternal line. Systolic thrills were palpable over the aortic, pulmonic, and mitral valve areas. The sounds at the base were replaced by loud systolic and diastolic murmurs. Presystolic and diastolic murmurs were heard over the mitral area. Separate murmurs were not distinguishable over the tricuspid area. Ascites was present (Fig. 51C) as well as edema of both feet.

**LABORATORY DATA.** The electrocardiogram showed the presence of auricular fibrillation (Fig. 51B). The roentgen-ray study (Fig. 51A) showed enlargement of all chambers of the heart. Increased hilum markings were seen, but there was no evidence of pleural thickening or effusion. Evidence was present of some calcium in the pericardium, but fluoroscopically there was good differentiation between auricular and ventricular impulse.

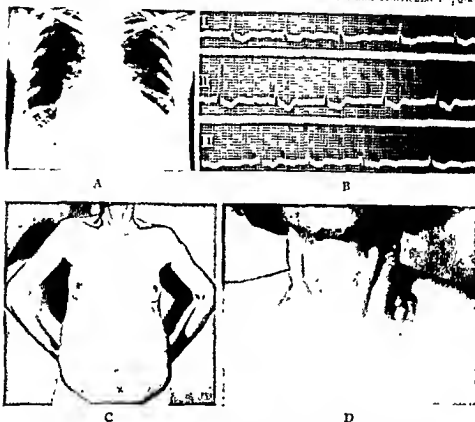


FIG. 51 A Roentgenogram showing cardiac enlargement in all diameters  
 B. The electrocardiogram. Auricular fibrillation is present. Note the depression of the S-T Intervals in all leads caused by digitalis action.  
 C. Marked ascites.  
 D. Swollen jugular veins. Patient in erect position.

indicating the absence of pericardial effusion. Urinalysis and blood count were normal. The blood Wassermann reaction was negative.

**CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS.** A. Etiologic: Rheumatic. Inactive. B. Anatomic: Cardiac enlargement. Mitral, aortic, tricuspid, and pulmonic stenosis and regurgitation. C. Physiologic: Auricular fibrillation. Congestive cardiac failure. D. Functional Classification: Class 4. Therapeutic Classification: Class E.

**Discussion.** Murmurs and thrills typical of stenosis and regurgitation were elicited over the aortic, mitral, and pulmonic areas. The findings were not so distinct over the tricuspid area. However, in the presence of such an extensive rheumatic endocarditis, it is reasonable to suppose that the tricuspid valve was involved at least to some degree in the same process. The presence of ascites and other signs of venous congestion

gave further support to the diagnosis of tricuspid stenosis. Other conditions that might account for the same clinical picture are chronic adhesive pericarditis (page 181), or a massive pericardial effusion. Adhesions in the region of the inferior vena cava or at the base of the right lung might obstruct the venous flow with the same result. The roentgen study was useful in ruling out these possibilities.

When this patient was first seen, she was given a hypodermic injection of morphine, 15 mg. ( $\frac{1}{4}$  grain) and digitalized in the usual manner. Following the intravenous administration of 1 cc. of mercupurin the next day, there was a diuresis amounting to 6000 cc. The edema of the feet disappeared completely, and the dyspnea was greatly relieved. The ascitic fluid collection was unaffected, and two days later, 10,000 cc. of a clear amber fluid were removed from the abdomen (page 95). Following this procedure, the liver was readily palpable a hand's breadth below the right costal margin. It was smooth, firm, and slightly tender.

Intravenous injection of 2 cc. of mercupurin was begun and continued every five days in an attempt to prevent the reaccumulation of ascites. Although the fluid collected in the peritoneal cavity, the amount was much less than ordinarily observed, and some decrease in the abdominal tension followed each injection of the diuretic. During the first few months, nausea and occasional vomiting spells appeared the day after the injection of the mercupurin. A pulsus bigeminus was observed at this time. These signs and symptoms suggested a toxic action following the diuresis, which swept back into the blood stream the digitalis contained in the body fluids. The maintenance dose of digitalis was accordingly stopped the day before the injections of mercupurin and resumed the following day. The toxic effects did not reappear. The pulse remained at 70, the appetite improved, and the exercise tolerance was fair. A mild state of congestive failure persisted, but the patient was able to be about on one floor of the house.

During the next six years, a total of 430 injections of 2 cc. of mercupurin at five-day intervals were given to this patient. Repetition of the abdominal tapping was unnecessary for four years. Paracentesis was performed once during the fifth year and three times during the sixth year. *The patient is still ambulatory at this writing. She has been most co-operative in keeping her intake-output records and is an expert in the matter of digitalis maintenance dosage. She illustrates what may at times be accomplished by maintaining digitalis plus maintenance diuretic therapy.*

Long periods of survival from the time of onset of symptoms of congestive failure are not uncommon in these patients who show combined valvular lesions. The continued congestion of the portal system in this case that followed the development of tricuspid stenosis may serve a useful purpose in limiting the return flow of blood to the heart and relieving the strain on a badly damaged organ. For the same reason, the pulmonary fields show a less marked congestion than is usually found in

section, and morphine was prompt. In other instances, however, the diagnosis is by no means so easily made.

The response to epinephrine in a patient giving a previous history of allergy may be confusing. In this case epinephrine had given but slight relief compared to the marked benefit that always followed its administration in previous years. Untoward effects, on the other hand, are not at all uncommon following the persistent use of epinephrine in this type of heart failure.

The clinical examination often gives the most valuable evidence for making the differential diagnosis. Fortunately, in this patient, although emphysema was present to some degree, accurate determination of the heart size was possible. The accentuation of the pulmonic second sound also attracted attention to the congested condition of the pulmonary fields secondary to the sudden failure of the left ventricle. In patients who exhibit less pronounced signs of cardiac disease, other diagnostic measures are necessary.

Venous pressure readings have been useful in differentiating bronchial from cardiac asthma. During an asthmatic seizure of purely allergic origin, the venous pressure is usually normal, while marked elevation may appear in the presence of the left ventricular failure that accompanies cardiac asthma. During a paroxysm, however, the technic of the procedure is not as readily carried out as it is after the attack has been relieved.

For this reason estimation of the circulation time is now looked upon as the most valuable laboratory procedure in making the differential diagnosis. During an attack of left ventricular failure, the velocity of the blood flow through the lungs as well as in the systemic circulation is decreased. The cyanide method is probably the best to use because of the sharp end point obtained that does not depend on the response of the patient. Arm-to-lung time may likewise be satisfactorily measured by the injection of 0.3 cc. of ether into the arm vein and noting the time that elapses before it is detected on the patient's breath. The patient with uncomplicated bronchial asthma will show normal circulation time, while cardiac asthma produces an increase in the circulation time.<sup>160, 301, 318</sup>

This patient was slowly digitalized after relief of the attack was obtained. The whole leaf of digitalis was used and full effect was observed when 15 tablets (0.1 Gm. each) had been given over the course of a week. At the end of this time the patient felt much improved, and since there had been no recurrence of the paroxysmal dyspnea, she was anxious to go home. Two days following discharge, however, mild seizures began to appear at night, and for the first time, a slight amount of edema of the feet was noticed. The liver was 5 cm. below the right costal margin. Consequently, she was given two enteric coated tablets of ammonium chloride 0.5 Gm. (7½ grains) after meals and injections of mercupurin (2 cc.) every sixth day. A maintenance dose of digitalis, found to be 1½ grains every second day, was continued and 60 mg. (1 grain) of

phenobarbital was given at bedtime. Although the patient was allowed to be out of bed, her activities were restricted to one floor of the house, and she was advised to create a part-time position in her household for a willing but much younger neighbor. On this program she has had no recurrence of her attacks of cardiac dyspnea for a period of five months.

Although a good therapeutic result was obtained considering the age and the amount of cardiac damage present, the one mistake in management was made when the patient was permitted to be out of bed and to return home in one week. This, no doubt, was responsible for recurrence of the attacks. A minimum period of three weeks away from even the lighter burdens that arise in the care of a home should be obtained. If thrombi have formed in the heart during the period of congestive failure when slowing of the blood stream takes place, the prolonged rest period may permit them to become better organized and adherent, and consequently there may be less subsequent danger of embolism. The longer rest may also be a factor in preventing early recurrence of attacks of congestive failure, since it makes possible a more complete training in proper regulation of the regime, and allows a better recovery of the cardiac muscle.

A patient may occasionally be encountered where the etiology of the congestive failure is obscure. If a malignant growth has been discovered in any part of the body, a metastatic process involving the heart should be suspected (page 430).

Edema resulting from vitamin-B deficiency states may likewise appear in rare instances in the guise of cardiac failure. It may be entirely due to the lack of the vitamin, or the vitamin deficiency may be the contributing cause in the appearance of symptoms in a patient with previous cardiac damage. Consequently, when the etiology of congestive failure is obscure, inquiry should be made concerning the dietary habits (page 556).

## THE PROBLEM OF RHEUMATIC HEART DISEASE

When climatic conditions have augmented the severity of a disease or epidemic, the customary therapeutic measures are much less efficacious than a change from the predisposing climatic conditions.—CORVISART, 1806.

Rheumatic infection is the most frequent cause of organic heart disease. Appearing in various guises, it bewilders us when we become too optimistic concerning our progress in the conquest of infections. While perhaps not the most fatal, the rheumatic state is one of the most crippling of the diseases that attack mankind. Although referred to by some as acute articular rheumatism, we can say as we view this infection in the light of modern knowledge, that it is neither entirely acute nor entirely articular. It now seems certain that once invaded, the human host may harbor the inciting agent for months or years and when resistance is lowered, acute exacerbations may appear. In this respect, rheumatic infection is not unlike tuberculosis and syphilis.

The rheumatic invasion is not always accompanied by articular manifestations; in fact, in some instances the disease may be present for years and never produce joint symptoms or for that matter rheumatic pains of any kind. As more detailed knowledge is accumulated, the real nature of rheumatic disease has been recognized, and today instead of considering this modern plague of childhood as an acute disease limited to one region of the body, we regard it as a chronic smoldering threat to the integrity of many organs. Although much attention centers around the results of rheumatic invasion of the heart, few organs of the body fail to feel its touch or lack in a few years the typical scars that reveal its presence. The fibrous-tissue structures in the body bear the main burden of the attack. The heart, the joints, the subcutaneous tissues, the lungs, the brain, and other organs all show inflammatory reactions that involve this element of their structure.

The clinical picture produced by rheumatic infection is by no means uniform. In children, as a rule, the cutaneous tissues are involved to a greater extent than the joint structures. However, the signs and symptoms may vary even in individuals of the same group. One child may have chorea, another tonsillitis, a third only fever and loss of weight; and yet the same amount of heart damage may result in each case.

## PRESENT-DAY VIEWS ON ETIOLOGY

Although the search has been long and intense, the cause of rheumatic fever or the rheumatic state is still a matter of controversy. Numerous investigators have isolated streptococci from the lesions, but proof that these organisms have a direct relationship to rheumatic fever has not been convincing. As early as 1900, Poynton and Paine demonstrated the presence of a diplococcus in the blood and tissues of rheumatic patients. Many subsequent investigators have confirmed this observation, while others have held out against a too quick acceptance of the streptococcus as the specific cause of the rheumatic process. Shick, in 1912, suggested that allergy to the toxin of the streptococcus could account for some of the arthritic and endocardial manifestations of the disease, while Schlesinger and his coworkers have considered a filterable virus as the likely cause.<sup>329</sup> Even protozoa have not been above suspicion as causative agents in rheumatism. However, while conclusive proof in the matter has yet to be presented, a poll of opinions of bacteriologists at the present time would show that the streptococcus leads the list of suspected organisms.

The exact mode of entry of the causative agent into the body is another unsettled point. Available evidence seems to point to the tonsillar area as the most likely spot for the invasion to begin, since many times initial attacks as well as recurrences are ushered in by the appearance of sore throat. Cultures from the tonsillar area during acute attacks often reveal the suspected streptococcus. Adenoid tissues and lymph follicles in the pharynx as well as decayed or abscessed teeth, infected sinuses, middle-ear disease and the vast area of the gastro-intestinal tract have been regarded as possible foci.

**Age of Onset.** We generally consider rheumatic infection as a disease of childhood or adolescence, since in most cases the first symptoms appear between the ages of four and fifteen. When the onset is observed in early adult life, there are usually differences in the character, the manifestations, the course, and the prognosis. In general the earlier the onset, the greater the number of recurrences and the greater the chance for cardiac involvement. Females are affected more often than males. Wilson and his coworkers,<sup>415</sup> in a study of 400 cases of rheumatic infection varying in age from infancy to 22 years, found that 61.2 per cent were females and 38.8 per cent males.

**Racial Factors.** A study of the various races represented in our groups of clinic patients with rheumatic heart disease is misleading, since we cannot separate the racial factors from the environmental. Beyond a doubt, rheumatic infection is widely distributed all over the world and has been observed to attack every race of mankind. However, the incidence has been reported to be much less among Chinese.

**Disease of Temperate Zone.** Rheumatic infection is a disease that

flourishes in temperate climates, a fact that should always warrant consideration in the management of these cases. Competent observers in tropical climates have repeatedly stated that they have never seen a case of rheumatic fever, chorea, or mitral stenosis. Cold, damp, temperate climates favor the rheumatic state, and in the cardiac clinics situated in large cities along our northern seaboard, the bulk of the cases belong to the rheumatic group. Acute recurrences are most common among this group in the late winter and early spring months.<sup>27, 272, 279, 280</sup>

**Familial Incidence.** Rheumatic infection has a tendency to show a much higher incidence in certain families.<sup>227</sup> It is not at all uncommon to find a mother and one or two children showing signs of rheumatic heart disease, and in some instances the lesions discovered may be identical. The practitioner of the old school who acquired his patients at birth and took care of them during the years that followed fully appreciated this tendency for certain types of disease to appear more frequently in some families than coincidence could explain. This keen insight often places the general practitioner above the level of the specialist in his ability to detect early manifestations of rheumatic disease, and the secret of this skill lies in what we refer to today as hereditary diathesis, or to state it his way, "some families offer better soil for rheumatic infection than others."

**Environmental influences** cannot be entirely removed from the picture, for is it not possible that the rheumatic disease arises from close contacts in families, schools, or barracks?<sup>138</sup> On this basis, we can also explain its greater frequency in the crowded tenement districts than in the other communities where standards of living are higher. Statistics show that rheumatic infection is much more prevalent in cities and towns, particularly, in crowded industrial sections where it flourishes among the undernourished children of the working classes.<sup>295, 296</sup>

## THE LESION

Rheumatic infection produces a characteristic lesion in many of the tissues of the body. We may consider this rheumatic nodule or Aschoff body analogous to the miliary nodule that is so common in tuberculosis. As it appears in the heart muscle, the heart valves, the pericardium, the brain, and the joints, it is an example of the proliferative type of tissue reaction. The second type of lesion so commonly produced by rheumatic invasion is described as exudative. This is found in joints and in the pericardium. The Aschoff cells that are observed in the proliferative type are large endotheloid cells containing several nuclei. They are usually surrounded by lymphocytes and plasma cells, and close inspection shows a fibroblastic reaction in the surrounding tissues. Aschoff bodies vary in size and shape and are most often situated near a blood vessel (Fig. 53).

The subcutaneous nodule visible on gross inspection and so characteristic of rheumatic disease is similar in its construction to the Aschoff



body (Fig. 54). These nodules are generally painless and may be found in some cases around the malleoli, the elbows, the knees or vertebral

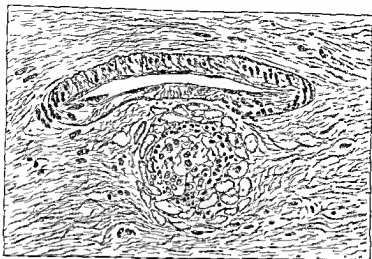


FIG. 53. A typical Aschoff body. Note relationship to blood vessel.

spines. Both of these manifestations of the rheumatic state, one occurring in the myocardium as the Aschoff body of submiliary size and the other visible macroscopically in the subcutaneous tissues, may appear and disappear very quickly. Furthermore, they may be present in abundance during some years in all rheumatic cases, while during other years, workers in the same clinic will detect very few. This is particularly true of the nodules.

Typical Aschoff bodies are found at autopsy in many, but by no means all, cases of rheumatic fever. They are more apt to be present in the myocardium, especially in the auricular wall and in the interventricular septum, and usually heal with the production of small myocardial scars. Occasionally in severe cases the coronary arteries become involved, causing alterations in the blood flow to the heart muscle and consequently grave myocardial impairment may result. The Aschoff bodies

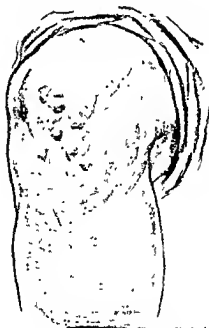


FIG. 54. Rheumatic nodules.

in the septum involve the bundle of His, and the edema that attends the inflammatory process may cause a delay in the transmission of the con-

traction impulse from the auricle to the ventricle. This will be reflected in the electrocardiogram (page 616). When the acute rheumatic invasion subsides, normal function of the bundle is restored (page 139).

## PATHOLOGY

Rheumatic infection reaches the heart valves through the blood stream. Since the mitral valve contains more blood vessels than the others, it is usually the first to be invaded. The small vessels in the valves persist longest in the mitral valve. Therefore, the younger the patient, the greater the likelihood of rheumatic involvement. In the healing process that follows, the delicate texture of the valve is destroyed, and it becomes thickened and stiffened. Calcium deposits may occur later in these diseased tissues, causing them to stand out in the blood stream, increasing the obstructive or stenotic nature of the process. An equally important feature of rheumatic infection as far as valvular function is concerned is the invasion and subsequent contraction of the chordae tendinae.

The inflammatory changes produced by the rheumatic process in all severe cases spread readily to the pericardial surfaces. The gloss that normally characterizes this epithelial structure quickly disappears and is replaced by a fibrinous exudate. The pericardial layers become adherent and when separated at autopsy, the typical "bread and butter" appearance is seen. Fluid usually accompanies these exudative reactions and accumulates in the pericardial sac in small amounts.

**Relation of Structural Changes to Physical Signs.** Invasion of the myocardium, endocardium, and pericardium produces the structural alterations just reviewed. These form the basis for the physical signs that we search for in patients suspected of harboring rheumatic infection. Various murmurs that have been described previously (page 17) are produced; the most common, of course, is the one that accompanies mitral regurgitation. The stiffening and thickening of the mitral valve causes the presystolic murmur of stenosis at the time of auricular systole, which is best heard over the region of the apex beat, while weakening of the muscular ring figures largely in the production of the regurgitant murmur. When the aortic cusps are invaded, insufficiency is produced, and a diastolic murmur appears, which is best heard along the left sternal border. In rheumatic disease at this area, valvular damage is the chief factor in the regurgitation. In syphilitic disease regurgitation results when the aortic wall becomes weakened and dilated and when the valve insertions in this area are included in the mass of inflammatory tissue.

**INVASION OF THE PERICARDIUM** with the deposition of fibrin produces a friction rub (page 163). Later adhesions form. If the layers of the pericardium become adherent, little harm results and no characteristic signs appear. However, if the thickening of the pericardium takes place and interferes with diastolic filling of the heart, much disability may result during the ensuing years (page 179).

CONSIDERABLE MYOCARDIAL DAMAGE may quickly follow acute rheumatic infection, and dilatation and failure may take place early. Inflammatory lesions in the myocardium near the conduction bundle or its branches may make their presence known by functional alterations. Focal myocardial lesions may likewise produce changes in the heart rhythm by initiating premature auricular or ventricular beats.

Other organs of the body may be extensively involved in the spread of the rheumatic infection. Changes in the brain produce the symptoms of chorea and when the lungs are invaded, the characteristic hemorrhagic manifestations that often appear have been termed "rheumatic pneumonia." Vascular lesions in the aorta as well as in the small arteries of the body are often encountered. Although the damage in the aorta may resemble that produced by syphilis in type, it cannot approach it in severity, consequently mycotic aneurysms following acute rheumatic infection, while possible, are rare occurrences.

In each patient the extent and severity of the rheumatic involvement will be different. Even when the damage is confined to the heart, one patient may have a greater degree of myocardial damage with endocarditis and present many signs that can be readily detected clinically, while another may have an invasion of the myocardium that will produce few clinical signs and those demonstrable with great difficulty, if at all, in the early stages.

## SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

The most valuable signs and symptoms to elicit in cases of rheumatic infection are those produced by activity of the process, for these guide us in the management of the patient. This is particularly true in childhood when the symptoms of the disease often simulate a tuberculous infection.

**Loss of Weight.** Activity of the rheumatic process is usually attended by loss of weight, although it is not as extreme as in tuberculosis. Many cases simply do not gain and return to the physician month after month registering the initial weight. Very few are overweight. Coombs claims that malnutrition is not so definite when aortic lesions predominate.<sup>71, 72</sup> He attributes the failure to gain weight to the interference with oxygenation of the tissues that is present in mitral stenosis and points to the fact that when this lesion develops early in life, grave interference with development may take place (mitral dwarfism).

Pallor is usually present, and its appearance should always suggest activity of the rheumatic process. It may be accompanied by a moderate secondary anemia, and when mitral obstruction is present, by a trace of cyanosis as well. Marked pallor of a characteristic type is seen in these patients when subacute bacterial endocarditis develops.

Fever usually attends the course of the disease, but its absence should not be considered as a strong point against the diagnosis of an active rheumatic lesion in the presence of other constitutional symptoms. The

elevation of the temperature may be very slight; and in some cases this may be the only evidence of activity on physical examination. High temperatures usually accompany fulminating infections, particularly when the brain is the seat of widespread involvement.

**Anorexia.** In the presence of even slight fever, anorexia will appear, the child will show a disinclination to play, and will tire easily. Irritability and nervousness are common symptoms. The first visit to the physician is often made at this stage. A careful examination of the "run-down child" may then permit an early diagnosis of rheumatic infection (page 169). Many of these patients are sent to the hospital for tonsillectomy with no other symptoms than pallor, anorexia, and failure to gain weight. A careful study of every child should be carried out before operation, since an ill-advised tonsillectomy at this stage usually gives a considerable impetus to the invasion.

A sore throat heralds the onset of a rheumatic exacerbation in many instances, but is not invariably present. All types of muscle and joint pains in children should be viewed with suspicion, and a thorough investigation should be made. The importance of joint pains is emphasized when they occur with any other of the manifestations of rheumatic disease. The joint pain may be a mild evanescent process in some cases, while in others one joint after another may be attacked in typical textbook fashion, usually the wrists, ankles, knees, elbows, and shoulders in the order named, the pain and swelling disappearing from one joint as another is attacked.

The "nervous child" should be examined to rule out rheumatic infection. Children sent home from school because of their inability to sit still should be disciplined only after a visit has been made to the physician. The twitchings and choreiform movements become pronounced and generalized when the infection in the nervous system has advanced. Choreiform movements are accentuated by excitement and activity and are usually absent during sleep. Although rheumatic infection is by far the most common type of involvement causing chorea, other diseases, for example, syphilis and encephalitis, may occasionally produce it.

Symptoms of a pulmonary nature may occur in many cases; these have suggested to some investigators a special type of rheumatic pneumonia. Specific lesions in the lungs have been described<sup>137, 225, 286</sup> but here there is much difference of opinion. Hemorrhagic manifestations should not puzzle the physician when they occur during the course of acute rheumatic fever. When they select the lungs, and many alveoli are involved, they produce physical signs that simulate pneumonia.<sup>293</sup>

**Abdominal Pain.** During the course of rheumatic fever, particularly in children, attacks of abdominal pain are not infrequent. In some cases this symptom may be referred from a pericardial lesion. In others the pain may be related to the gastric disturbance that sometimes attends salicylate medication. In some children suffering from acute rheumatic infection unexplained vomiting may occur. Rarely lesions of a rheumatic nature involving the hip joint may cause abdominal pain.

Invasion of the heart during the course of rheumatic fever may be heralded by an increase in the temperature and an elevation of the pulse rate. When the pericardial sac is involved, precordial pain may appear. It is sharp, increased by breathing and by pressure of the stethoscope over the heart area and is usually accompanied by the characteristic to and fro friction sound. In some instances the friction rub is present without pain. A dull aching variety of precordial pain may occur at times in the absence of pericarditis. Pain of the anginal type is very rare following rheumatic infection except in the presence of aortic valvular disease with regurgitation, when it is usually believed to be a result of the low diastolic pressure and the decreased coronary filling. I have seen only two rheumatic children who had anginal pain associated with an aortic regurgitant lesion.

PALPITATION occurs and may be part of an effort syndrome that not infrequently accompanies any infectious process, or it may be the result of the presence of frequent premature beats. Only rarely is it caused by paroxysms of tachycardia or auricular fibrillation.

DYSPNEA frequently accompanies an acute rheumatic carditis in children and is generally attended by cardiac dilatation. It may be accentuated by the collection of fluid in the pericardial sac. Very seldom is the fluid present in sufficient amount following rheumatic infection to cause symptoms of tamponade and to require tapping (page 164). Dyspnea is one of the most common symptoms of chronic rheumatic heart disease, usually increasing as the lesion develops.

Hemorrhagic episodes are characteristic features of rheumatic disease, consequently an unexplained nose bleed in a child, particularly if recurrent, is a suggestive symptom. Purpura may be a rheumatic manifestation in rare cases, although even when associated with joint pains, such evidence is by no means conclusive. Embolic phenomena secondary to the endocardial involvement in acute rheumatic fever are rare.

**Physical Examination.** Detecting the presence of a disease that attacks nearly all the structures of the body containing fibrous tissue calls for a complete physical examination, not merely a cardiac study. The color of the skin and mucous membranes should be noted. Since petechiae, nodules, and skin rashes are important in diagnosis, the patient should be stripped. Careful observations should be made before, during and after the examination for the presence of twitchings. Nose, throat, ears, sinuses, teeth, and pharynx should be inspected for evidence of infection. The lymph nodes draining these areas should be carefully palpated, and roentgen examinations made when indicated.

CARDIAC EXAMINATION generally reveals little in the early stages. In some instances, the only signs aside from the tachycardia may be furnished by an electrocardiographic study. Here prolongation of the conduction time (pages 615, 139) may point to an acute rheumatic carditis. Signs of organic valve lesions are not present early in the disease. If signs of pericarditis are present, usually they have been preceded by more easily recognizable signs of cardiac involvement. Enlargement of the heart may

be evident on percussion, and it may be accompanied by the systolic apical murmur of relative mitral insufficiency. This soft murmur is usually the first on the scene, and the question always arises as to its exact significance. That it may at times be functional is shown by its disappearance when the acute infection subsides and the reappearance later of a murmur of harsher pitch, which is more significant evidence of organic valvular involvement.

**VALVULAR LESIONS.** In the later course of the rheumatic disease, valvular lesions offer abundant evidence of the presence of a cardiac invasion; in fact, *so absorbed does the student become in their study that other signs are often unrecognized.* Mitral valve disease is most frequent, and the



FIG. 55. Rheumatic heart disease. Stenosis of the mitral valve viewed from above.

harsh systolic apical murmur of uncomplicated regurgitation is more common in children. It is attended by an accentuated pulmonic second sound and cardiac enlargement. With recurring infection or with increased contraction of the scar tissue in the valve following the initial invasion, stenosis develops. The first reliable sign of its presence is a mid-diastolic apical murmur. To elicit the signs of early mitral stenosis, the patient should always be examined in both the erect and recumbent positions. Many times a murmur that is inaudible or questionable in the erect position becomes clearly evident in recumbency, after exercise, particularly if the patient is examined lying on the left side. Later in the course of the disease, the diastolic murmur may be readily heard in the erect position, and the typical presystolic accentuation will be recognized. As the stenosis of the mitral valve advances (Fig. 55), the first heart sound at the apex becomes louder and acquires a decided slapping quality. Palpation over the area of the apex will now reveal a diastolic thrill. Definite alteration in the cardiac silhouette occurs when mitral stenosis becomes established (Figs

20, 21), and characteristic changes may also appear in the electrocardiogram. (See Fig. 190.)

In advanced mitral stenosis, the left auricle becomes dilated. Further weakening of its walls by the inflammatory process that accompanies the rheumatic state makes it a vulnerable spot and sooner or later auricular fibrillation replaces normal rhythm (page 145). When co-ordinated auricular contractions cease, the crescendo quality of the apical diastolic murmur disappears, and only a short murmur is heard in this area in early diastole. The diagnosis of stenosis will then depend on the other features of the case, particularly the quality of the first heart sound and the appearance of auricular fibrillation in a patient with a definite rheumatic history.

When rheumatic infection attacks the aortic valve, the same changes occur and result first in regurgitation and later in stenosis. No sign of involvement of the aortic valve appears on physical examination until a cicatricial retraction produces regurgitation. As a portion of the blood projected into the aorta during systole flows backward through the damaged valve into the ventricle in diastole, it produces a blowing murmur heard best along the left sternal border at the third or fourth interspace. The murmur of aortic regurgitation may be heard at the end of expiration with the patient in the upright position and bending forward. Faint diastolic murmurs of early aortic regurgitation may sometimes be detected only by the use of the Bowles stethoscope attachment. This murmur is transmitted in the direction of the regurgitant stream of blood and may be heard as far down as the cardiac apex. The aortic regurgitant murmur is audible in early diastole, a fact that at once serves to differentiate it from the late diastolic murmur of mitral stenosis. In addition, the diastolic murmur of aortic regurgitation is a high-pitched blowing murmur, while the diastolic murmur of mitral stenosis is low-pitched and has a rumbling quality. The mitral diastolic murmur is heard over a small area in the region of the apex, while the aortic diastolic murmur has a much wider distribution.

When the degree of rheumatic involvement becomes greater and the cusps of the aortic valve adhere, a systolic murmur appears over this valve area, which, as the degree of stenosis increases, becomes more harsh and more intense. A systolic thrill is palpable over the aortic area at this stage and the aortic second sound is diminished or absent. A plateau type of pulse and a low pulse pressure can usually be demonstrated.

In any rheumatic case the physical signs of aortic or mitral valvular disease depend on the relative degrees of regurgitation or stenosis present. If regurgitation is the main lesion at the aortic area, the diastolic murmur is long and loud and the peripheral vascular signs striking, while if stenosis predominates, the systolic murmur over the aortic area will be the main element and the diastolic murmur, although heard in the same area, will be shorter and less intense. When aortic regurgitation is marked, there are characteristic alterations in the cardiac size and shape (see Fig.

23). Often in patients with aortic insufficiency the degree of left ventricular hypertrophy is extreme.

HEALED VALVULAR LESIONS at the mitral and aortic areas are the usual sequelae of rheumatic infection; less often involvement of the tricuspid and pulmonary valves occurs. Valvular lesions lead to cardiac hypertrophy, and, in the course of time, are followed by heart failure. A less frequent manifestation of rheumatic infection that may occur later in life is calcareous aortic stenosis. Described first by Monckeberg in 1904, the etiology of this lesion has since formed the topic of much speculation. Many clinicians consider it a manifestation of atherosclerosis; others claim that it arises as a result of healing of a subacute bacterial endocarditis. The majority of observers now consider it as a late manifestation of rheumatic heart disease.<sup>413</sup>

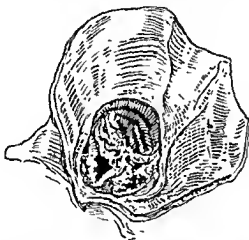


FIG. 56. Rheumatic endocarditis. The calcific type of aortic stenosis (viewed from above).

IN CALCAREOUS AORTIC STENOSIS, fusion of all the cusps is usually seen (Fig. 56). The reduced blood supply to this area favors the deposition of calcium, and the degree of obstruction becomes extreme. Many times these calcium deposits in the valve can be visualized by roentgenologic methods (see Fig. 26). Calcareous aortic stenosis is much more frequently seen in males than in females and is accompanied by extreme cardiac hypertrophy. It occurs at any age. Angina may be present, and this complication makes sudden death a possibility.

SPECIAL METHODS OF EXAMINATION are valuable aids in the diagnosis of rheumatic infection. Aside from the electrocardiographic examination, the roentgen-ray study (page 37) may be depended upon to reveal characteristic alterations in size and shape of the heart in the presence of all types of rheumatic disease. The sedimentation rate is a valuable index of activity (page 57), while the blood count will reveal anemia and leukocytosis. The blood culture shows no growth. The urinary findings are influenced by the presence of active infection and congestive cardiac failure.



## PROGNOSIS

The prognosis of rheumatic heart disease is difficult, if not impossible, to state when the patient is first examined. Caution, however, must be used in giving too grave an outlook, especially in children in the presence of an active process (page 167). When the infection subsides and the heart balance is in some degree restored, a continued, although restricted existence, may be possible for many years. Conduction defects disappear, heart size diminishes, even murmurs may fade from the picture along with the active rheumatic state.<sup>31</sup> Exceptional cases may recover to such an extent that on future examination all evidence of the existence of so severe a carditis will be lacking.

**Individual Factors.** I do not believe that we can predict the outcome of acute rheumatic carditis in any patient by the course that the disease has previously pursued in brother, sister, or parent. While heredity has some bearing on the patient's disease, the progress and the ultimate degree of cardiac damage are individual factors and subject to wide variations. It can be safely stated, however, that the earlier the onset, the worse the prognosis and the greater the likelihood of cardiac involvement. The disease has a tendency to pursue a more fatal course in females than in males. It is important to determine and record the number of attacks in the history. As a rule the greater the number of attacks, the more likelihood there is of a resultant cardiac damage, whereas if there is a definite history obtained of a number of rheumatic episodes, and the heart shows slight damage, it is unlikely that future recurrences will be any more severe. As the patient grows older and passes puberty, the physician is less fearful of the cardiac sequelae of the recurring attacks.

The discovery of rheumatic nodules (Fig. 54) aside from the value in clinching the diagnosis, likewise aids in prognosis. As a rule the patients showing typical nodules may be expected to have a stormy time and acquire early and usually serious cardiac damage. A blond child under 10 who shows fever and nodules will usually cause many an anxious moment before signs of infection become quiescent.

The environment has a decided influence on the progress of the disease.<sup>365, 366</sup> Poor housing conditions, dampness and all the aspects of poverty that may be encountered contribute to persistence of the infection, while warmer climates, sunshine, and good food have a favorable influence on the course of the disease, and consequently are factors that support a more favorable prognosis.

Occupation plays a decided role in prognosis. If strenuous work is carried on by young men and women whose education has been frequently interrupted by episodes of acute rheumatic infection, it leads to a greater degree of cardiac disability. Those who are fitted for lighter and higher salaried positions survive longer, other things being equal.

Pregnancy may add to the gravity of the prognosis in some cases (page 452), but it is surprising how well many patients with advanced lesions progress through one or even two pregnancies without adding to the cardiac embarrassment or inducing recurrence of the rheumatic process (Chapter 15). There is an unpredictable (and fortunately rare) danger of invasion of organisms that may attack the already damaged heart valves.

The occurrence of subacute bacterial endocarditis naturally alters the prognosis at once. In this event, instead of remaining a mild case of healed rheumatic infection with a good prognosis, the patient becomes a hopeless case. This is one of the major tragedies in the course of rheumatic heart disease.

**Congestive Heart Failure.** If the patient survives the acute attack of rheumatic fever and is fortunate enough to avoid the complication of subacute bacterial endocarditis, the possibility of congestive heart failure in middle life lies ahead. Slight lesions in patients who are carefully watched may be compatible with a long life. Willius has shown that the average age at death of the patient with mitral disease is 30 years; 32 years when both aortic and mitral valves are involved; and 43 years when the aortic valve alone is affected.<sup>111</sup>

**Thrombus Formation.** In patients with advanced mitral stenosis the late course is very apt to be complicated by auricular enlargement and auricular fibrillation. This combination paves the way for another danger, for under these circumstances slowing of the blood current in the atrium favors thrombus formation. Particles of the clots then become dislodged and form emboli.

**Hemoptysis.** Increase in the pulmonary pressure that follows advancing stenosis may cause capillary rupture, and hemoptysis may appear. This symptom in later life again suggests the diagnosis of tuberculosis, particularly if the patient shows fever and pallor and has a history of loss of weight. However, tuberculosis is very unusual in patients with mitral stenosis.

## TREATMENT

While it is true that we are still groping in the dark for the cause of rheumatic infection, careful management can accomplish much. Except for the almost specific value of salicylate therapy in joint involvement, we have no potent drug or serum to use in our fight which in most cases results in a long siege. However, gratifying results are many times possible if we adopt and follow a definite plan of therapy.

The first essential to success is to obtain the full co-operation of the patient and his family. This is accomplished by acquainting them with the nature of the disease and the basic principles of the method that will be used in combating it. The more the patient knows about the type and extent of his cardiac disability, the better equipped will he be for the future. When the disease remains smoldering after the mildest and most



A



B

FIG. 57. A. The Children's Heart Hospital. B. A school session, Children's Heart Hospital.

Stroud and McMillan<sup>362</sup> have called attention to the need in this country of increased facilities for prolonged convalescent care of children with active and latent rheumatic carditis. More specially equipped hospitals are needed, for they can carry on this work with a higher degree of efficiency than the ordinary hospital. Each patient requires proper grading of his exercise and the supervision of workers who are skilled in the detection of signs of early activity. But most important of all, heart hospitals are equipped to carry on the long siege against rheumatic infection and do not neglect the scholastic education of their patients during the many months of bed rest (Fig. 57). Education is the great need of the young cardiac patient because adequate training may enable him to obtain a sedentary occupation at a later date.

Children are admitted to heart hospitals for long periods, usually from 12 to 18 months, and only those cases are accepted that may be expected to derive benefit from the course of treatment. The requirements for admission to the Children's Heart Hospital in Philadelphia are as follows:<sup>363</sup>

1. Age limit Boys, 3 to 12 years, girls, 3 to 13 years.
2. Children shall have either possible or potential heart disease.
3. No patients who have had congestive cardiac failure or who have a hopeless prognosis shall be admitted.
4. Before admission each child shall spend at least two weeks in a hospital.
5. As far as possible all foci of infection should be removed.
6. Parents shall agree that children will remain in the hospital from three to six months or longer, at the physician's discretion.

TABLE IV

## DAILY ROUTINE IN CHILDREN'S HEART HOSPITAL (Stroud and McMillan)\*

|                                                        |       |                   |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-------|-------------------|
| Temperatures . . . . .                                 | 7     | to 7:30 a.m.      |
| Breakfast . . . . .                                    |       | 7:30 a.m.         |
| Older children attend school from . . . . .            | 9     | to 11:30 a.m.     |
| Younger children rest from . . . . .                   | 9:30  | to 11:30 a.m.     |
| Younger children attend school from . . . . .          | 11:30 | to 12:30 p.m.     |
| Older children rest from . . . . .                     | 11:30 | to 12:30 p.m.     |
| Dinner . . . . .                                       |       | 12:30 p.m.; radio |
| Temperatures . . . . .                                 | 1     | to 1:30 p.m.      |
| Younger children attend school from . . . . .          | 1:30  | to 3 p.m.         |
| Older children play until 2:30 and rest from . . . . . | 2:30  | to 4 p.m.         |
| Younger children rest from . . . . .                   | 3     | to 4 p.m.         |
| Play hour . . . . .                                    | 4     | to 5:15 p.m.      |
| Temperatures . . . . .                                 |       | 5:15 p.m.         |
| Supper . . . . .                                       |       | 5:30 p.m.; radio  |
| Bedtime . . . . .                                      |       | 6:15 p.m.; radio  |

\*Trans. Sec. Dis. of Children of Amer. Med. Asso. 1927. Reprinted by permission of Amer Med Asso

Table IV gives an idea of the average schedule of the patients in the Children's Heart Hospital in Philadelphia. Reviewing the first 225 cases subjected to this special environment and care, Stroud and McMillan reported marked improvement in 108 children. These patients on discharge were able to carry out practically the same daily routine as healthy children of the same age and social status.

During the prolonged convalescent period that follows an attack of

rheumatic infection, regular visits to the physician's office should be made. The patient should be told that these visits are not for the purpose of obtaining medicine, but for the detection of any clue that might suggest a recurrence of the infection. When the physical status is determined at each follow-up examination, suitable adjustments in the exercise allowance may be made. This prescription is based on the extent of the lesion and the weight but is mostly governed by the symptoms, if any, produced by the previous exercise allowance. In the case of children, a contact should be established with the school authorities in order that co-operation may be obtained in carrying out the planned program.

Some patients visit their physician every month; others every two, three, or even six months as the circumstances demand. It can be truthfully stated that advanced cardiac disease develops more often in those who refuse to co-operate with the physician or clinic in the matter of these routine follow-up examinations. However, it seems that it will always remain a problem to convince patients and their parents of the necessity of regular visits to the doctor when they "feel fine," particularly when no special therapy is carried out at the time of the visit and no prescription for medicine is forthcoming. Many times in cases of this type, some form of physiotherapy or even a placebo may prove valuable in management. After all, anything that ultimately proves of advantage to the patient may be viewed as good treatment.

#### MANAGEMENT OF ARTHRITIS

Although I cannot prove my point by an array of statistics, I believe that the joint manifestations of rheumatic infection are less often seen today than they were 20 years ago. A possible explanation lies in the freer use of proprietary preparations earlier in all fevers by the modern American family.

The salicylates have a specific action on the joint manifestations of rheumatic fever. When they fail, the reason is either insufficient dosage or a mistaken diagnosis. Sodium salicylate in doses of 4.0 to 7.0 Gm. (60 to 100 grains) daily in small children and higher in older children and adults usually eliminates all joint symptoms within 24 hours. The fever likewise decreases as the joint signs disappear (see Fig. 59). Salicylates should always be administered with an alkali in the form of an equal amount of bicarbonate of soda. The error frequently is made in giving too small rather than too large doses of sodium salicylate. If gastric irritability occurs with doses which are inadequate to control the joint symptoms, the salicylate can readily be given by bowel. A dose of 8.0 Gm. (120 grains) mixed in eight ounces of thin starch paste may be given twice daily. Only rarely is it necessary to resort to the intravenous use of salicylate, but when necessary, a 10 cc. ampule of a 20 per cent solution can be given two or three times a day. Prompt relief of pain follows this method, and if the injections are given slowly, reactions are few.

Administration of salicylates in very large doses will produce in some

patients a toxic state due to acidosis, and it is most important to recognize this if it occurs. Vomiting is a common symptom at the onset and may be followed by increased respiratory rate, fever, restlessness, and coma. Salicylism may be confused with diabetic acidosis, but the differentiation is possible by blood-sugar determination. Tinnitus, deafness, twitching, convulsions, and delirium are symptoms more characteristic of salicylate poisoning than diabetes. Toxic signs following excess salicylate administration are accompanied by a lowering of the carbon-dioxide level of the blood. The symptoms are relieved by alkalis.

The joints involved in acute rheumatic fever should be wrapped in cotton and protected from the weight of the bed clothes. A 20 per cent methyl-salicylate ointment may be used if preferred. Since careful nursing care is most essential, the acute cases should be sent to the hospital whenever possible.

### MANAGEMENT OF CHOREA

When the rheumatic infection invades the brain and choreiform movements develop, the patient should be moved to a peaceful, quiet environment. Again efficient nursing care is essential. If the movements persist, sedatives should be used freely. Either elixir of phenobarbital, 4.0 cc. (1 fl. dram), sodium bromide 0.6 to 1.0 Gm. (10 to 15 grains) or chlorotone 0.3 Gm. (5 grains) given after meals for a few days are helpful. The salicylate medication should be continued. Although the drug has no specific effect on either the nervous system or cardiac involvement, it is well to continue its use if the rheumatic invasion is active in localities other than the joints and is attended by pain.

**Fever Induction.** The most recent, and perhaps the most useful form of therapy for rapid relief of the symptoms of chorea, is fever induction by means of the Kettering apparatus.<sup>22, 367</sup> While it is possible to produce fever by intravenous injections of typhoid bacilli, it is best to use the induction method. Lately other forms of rheumatic infection have been treated by fever induction, and claims made that it shortens the duration of the attacks (page 523).

### OTHER FORMS OF THERAPY

**Tonsillectomy.** Since the belief that the tonsils are the portals of entry of the rheumatic infection is prevalent, no time is usually lost in removing them as soon as rheumatic activity is suspected. Often this is a grave risk, for severe recurrences after tonsil operations are not at all uncommon. Tonsillectomy should be carried out only when the infection has been found to be quiescent. It is never an emergency.

While considerable difference of opinion prevails concerning the ultimate value of this procedure, it is certainly wise to plan a tonsillectomy in rheumatic patients who show evidence of tonsillar hypertrophy, infection or secondary involvement of the cervical glands. Some protection against the temporary blood stream invasion that may follow is offered by the

administration of sulfanilamide in the proper dosage before and for a short time following the operation (page 198). While sulfanilamide may be of value in preventing a dangerous bacteremia following tonsillectomy, it does not affect the course of established rheumatic infection.<sup>61, 269, 270</sup>

Dietary measures should be directed toward keeping up the body weight. A high caloric, high vitamin diet is valuable. This may be fortified by the addition of 50 mg. of crystalline ascorbic acid (vitamin C) twice daily and 4.0 to 5.0 Gm. of brewer's yeast (vitamin B) daily in the form of tablets (Chapter 21).

**Sera and Vaccines.** Attempts at a more specific type of therapy have led to the administration of various sera and vaccines. The results reported show no uniformity and are all open to question. It must be remembered that we do not know the exact nature of the rheumatic infection, and until we do, such favorable results that follow the injection of the various preparations made up from the streptococcus must be regarded as non-specific. I have seen the indiscriminate use of vaccines many times light up a previously inactive rheumatic infection. Although I do not deny that the introduction of foreign protein will aid the mechanism of defense in some cases, I do not feel justified in attempting it, particularly when the patient is progressing slowly with the aid of his natural forces. The infection that "sleepeth harmeth nobody."

Prevention of recurring upper respiratory-tract infection in our rheumatic cases\* would be a most efficient means of lessening the number of attacks of rheumatic fever. Coburn<sup>69</sup> and others have transported rheumatic children to tropical and subtropical climates and have demonstrated that they are free of upper respiratory infection in these warmer latitudes and that all the rheumatic manifestations subside to return again when they are re-exposed to the climatic conditions of the northern seaboard states.

Roentgen-ray treatments over the precordium have been advocated by some workers in the hope of limiting infection and minimizing cardiac damage. As far as I can determine, these exposures have no effect whatsoever on the heart and appear to be ineffective and represent purely local thrusts at a generalized disease. Levy and Golden have recommended roentgen-ray therapy for various forms of rheumatic infection which show a low grade of activity.<sup>226</sup> The changes recorded in the electrocardiogram, the clinical improvement, and the relief of pain experienced by some cases suggested to these observers that such exposures have had a beneficial effect. They have reported a series of 48 cases seen during the past 11½ years. No harmful effects of irradiation were noted. The manner in which improvement is accomplished is unknown.

**Valvulotomy.** The surgical procedure of valvulotomy in mitral stenosis, aside from the difficulty in the technic and the risk involved, offers little even if successful, for the fibrous tissue in the valve may soon re-establish

\* Utopia in Philadelphia.

the stenosis. Where marked cardiac hypertrophy is present, rib resection has been occasionally successful.

### PREVENTIVE MEASURES

Early recognition of all the manifestations of the rheumatic state from "growing pains" to frank articular involvement and prompt treatment may aid in preventing advanced cardiac change. Where carditis is the only sign of the presence of the disease, frequent physical examinations of all school children make possible the early recognition of rheumatic infection. Suspicion of its presence should be entertained in all children who show pallor, anemia, loss of weight, and who complain of weakness or frequent unexplained nosebleeds. By the discovery of early cardiac involvement, we may in some measure prevent advanced hopeless lesions.

As far as the actual prevention of the disease itself is concerned, further investigations are needed by both clinician and laboratory worker. As Coombs<sup>72</sup> has stated,

Life is short—but art is long, and it is useless to attempt the annihilation of such a disease as this by an "intensive campaign"—To the conquest of disease there can be no short cuts. It is a painful hand-to-hand struggle in which everyone must be mobilized, and in no part of the battle-front is there better opportunity for successful co-operation between all sections of the profession—general practitioner, consultant and administration—than in that on which we are faced by rheumatic heart disease.

### ILLUSTRATIVE CASES

#### SUSPECTED RHEUMATIC HEART DISEASE—THE EVALUATION OF THE SYSTOLIC MURMUR WHEN IT REPRESENTS THE ONLY ABNORMAL FINDING

**CASE 9.** P. F., male, aged 10 years, was sent to the Cardiac Clinic of the Memorial Hospital on May 2, 1936, by a school physician. Complaints were nervousness and slight weight loss.

**HISTORY.** The birth had been normal. There was no history of rheumatic infection. He had a tonsillectomy at the age of five. There were no subjective symptoms referable to the cardiovascular system.

**PHYSICAL EXAMINATION.** Well-developed lad. Throat clean. Entire examination normal except for the presence of a soft, systolic apical murmur poorly transmitted into the axilla. The apex beat was in the fifth intercostal space well inside the mid-clavicular line. The heart sounds were normal. B.P. 110/80.

**LABORATORY DATA.** Wassermann reaction negative. Blood count normal. Sedimentation rate 5 mm. in one hour (Fig. 58C). A roentgen study (Fig. 58A) showed no cardiac enlargement. The electrocardiogram (Fig. 58B) was normal.

**CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS.** Class E. Signs referable to the heart but the diagnosis of heart disease cannot be proved. Murmur functional in type. Activity unrestricted.

**Discussion.** Well-established lesions at the mitral valve accompanied by cardiac enlargement usually offer no difficulty in diagnosis. However, a systolic murmur heard at the apex in otherwise healthy children continues



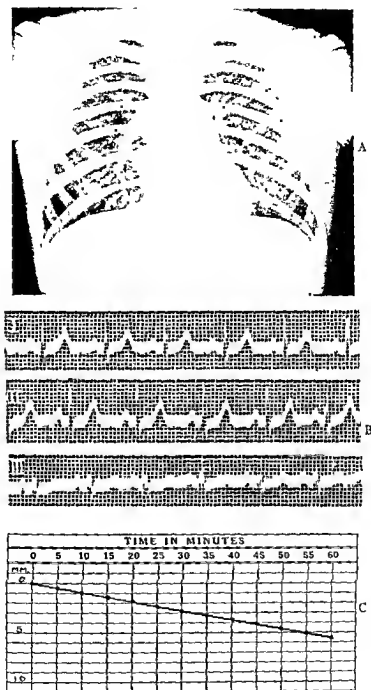


FIG. 58. A. The roentgenogram shows no cardiac enlargement.  
 B. The electrocardiogram is within normal limits. The notching and low voltage of QRSs not infrequently occur in the tracings of normal patients.  
 C. Sedimentation chart. The red blood cells show a fall of 6 mm. in one hour.

to be a stumbling block in cardiac diagnosis. Although I admit that in some cases the correct interpretation at the time the child is first seen is difficult, or impossible, the evaluation of the importance of the finding in the majority of cases presents very little difficulty if certain fundamental facts are kept in mind.

In the first place, many healthy children may show a transient soft, apical systolic murmur following excitement or exercise when the speed of the circulation is increased. It may likewise accompany fever or anemia. The murmur in this region may be heard only during a certain phase of respiration, or it may appear when the patient is in recumbency, disappearing in the erect position. The terms, "functional," "hemic," and "cardiorespiratory," are used in describing the systolic murmurs accompanying these conditions. Although these are acceptable terms, care should be used in describing the intensity, pitch, quality and duration of the murmurs heard (page 19). If this is done in all cases, the data obtained aids in the correct evaluation of the finding. For example, functional murmurs are more apt to be faint or moderate in intensity, while loud murmurs are nearly always associated with organic heart disease. Harmless murmurs are more apt to be short and blowing, while those of long duration, particularly if they are harsh, rumbling or crescendo, generally accompany disease of the valvular structures.

This boy had a faint blowing systolic murmur over the mitral area. Its duration was short, and it increased to moderate intensity in the recumbent position. Examination showed the absence of cardiac enlargement. So far, the criteria for a functional murmur have been fulfilled. However, the findings must be viewed in the light of the patient's past history. Did he have rheumatic fever or chorea? All we can elicit is a history of nervousness. It is unlikely that this symptom is related to chorea, since the blood count, sedimentation rate, temperature and weight, furnish no supporting clues.

If the patient had given us a clear-cut history of rheumatic fever, the evaluation of the murmur would have been more difficult. In these cases, if no cardiac enlargement accompanies the systolic murmur, and in the presence of negative laboratory studies, a definite answer cannot be given at once. Re-examination should be made two or three times a year. Meantime, since we are aware of the frequency of valvular disease following rheumatic fever, full activity should not be allowed. Certainly competitive sports should be eliminated until the child is older. If, as time goes by and puberty is passed, the findings remain constant, we can be certain that the heart has escaped, and full activity may be permitted. On the other hand, if the murmur becomes louder and longer, and cardiac enlargement appears, accompanied by an increased pulmonic second sound, a mitral regurgitation is probably present.

Sometimes the systolic murmur in the mitral area disappears. This is possible following the correction of severe anemia (page 424) or hyperthyroidism (page 356). A rapid heart rate following exercise may be accom-

panied by a systolic murmur that disappears following rest. In these instances, the increased velocity of the blood accounts for the production of the murmur.

# RHEUMATIC HEART DISEASE—ACUTE CARDITIS FOLLOWING TYPICAL JOINT INVOLVEMENT—MILD COURSE

Case 10. Mrs. C. Z., a housewife of 27, was well until two days before admission to the Woman's College Hospital on December 7, 1938. She first noticed sore throat which was followed a week later by high fever, sweating and pain and swelling in the left knee. There was no history of previous, similar attacks.

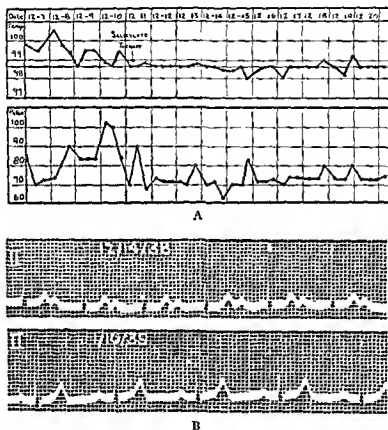


FIG. 59. A. Temperature-pulse record.  
B. The electrocardiogram. In the first record (lead 2) taken on 12/14/38 note prolongation of the P-R Intervals to 0.32 second. In the second record (same lead) taken on 1/10/39 the P-R Intervals are normal.

PHYSICAL EXAMINATION. B.P. 110/80. T. 100° F. Pulse 86. Respirations 20. Well-nourished adult female, not acutely ill. Tonsils red and enlarged. The left knee was swollen, and tender with restricted motion. The heart was normal in size. The apex beat was palpable in the fifth interspace well inside the midclavicular line. A soft systolic murmur was heard in the mitral area. The rhythm was regular.

LABORATORY DATA. W.B.C. 15,000; R.B.C. 4,500,000; Hemoglobin 84 per cent (Sahli). The electrocardiogram showed prolongation of the P-R intervals to 0.34 second (Fig. 59B).

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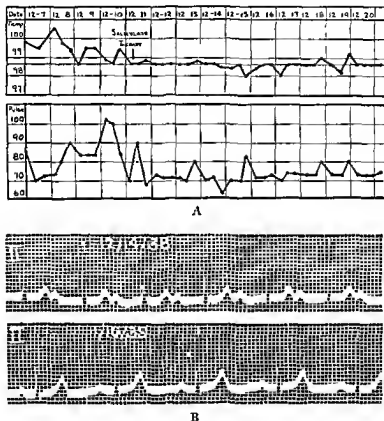


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LABORATORY DATA. W.B.C. 15,000, R.B.C. 4,500,000, Hemoglobin 84 per cent (Sahli). The electrocardiogram showed prolongation of the P-R intervals to 0.34 second (Fig. 59B).

**CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS.** A. Etiologic: Rheumatic. Active. B. Anatomic: No cardiac enlargement. Mitral regurgitation?? C. Physiologic: First stage heart block (Prolonged P-R intervals). D. Functional Classification: Class I. Therapeutic Classification: Class F.

**Discussion.** The onset here is quite typical. An attack of tonsillitis was followed by pain and swelling in the left knee. It would be hard to ignore such evidence. The large infected tonsils that were seen in this patient withstood many attacks, but the rheumatic invasion finally took place. In younger patients who have had one or more attacks of rheumatic fever, upper respiratory infections of any type are capable of producing fresh invasions. The common head cold must be viewed as a serious complication in a rheumatic subject. Each cold threatens to increase the amount of cardiac damage should it succeed in lighting up a latent infection. Consequently the rheumatic patient should always go to bed for a few days when the first signs of a head cold appear. Unnecessary contacts with individuals who have colds should be avoided as much as possible. The rheumatic subject should also be carefully examined for signs of activity when the symptoms of respiratory invasion have subsided.

Bed rest and salicylates were prescribed on admission in this case. The specific action of salicylates on the joint symptoms is readily seen in the temperature record (Fig. 59A). Four days after admission definite evidence of an acute inflammation of the heart appeared in the electrocardiogram (Fig. 59B). This finding was valuable in planning the subsequent management. Since the patient felt so much improved after the salicylate therapy, it was difficult to persuade her to remain in bed. She was a farmer's wife "always used to hard work" and had "three children waiting at home." When the situation was explained, the patient consented to remain in the hospital for a longer period of supervised bed rest. Salicylates were dropped at the end of the second week, and since there was no recurrence of fever or joint pain, they were not used again. The salicylates could have had no influence whatsoever on the course of the carditis.

During the next eight weeks of her stay in the hospital, no other drugs were used. The patient was placed on a high caloric diet, and cevitamic acid (vitamin C) was given in 20 mg. doses t.i.d. The tonsils, although large and infected, were allowed to remain. They will not be removed until full proof is at hand that the rheumatic infection is quiescent.

When the patient was discharged from the hospital to continue her convalescence at home, the following program was written out and given to her:

First week. Sit up in chair beside the bed one hour in the afternoon.

Second week. Sit up in chair for two hours every afternoon.

Third week. Sit up in chair one hour in the morning, and two hours in the afternoon.

May walk to the bathroom on the same floor.

Fourth week. Sit up in chair for two hours in the morning and two hours in the afternoon.

Walk to the bathroom on the same floor.

Fifth week. Same.

Sixth week. Up from 10 A.M. to 5 P.M. Do not go downstairs.

Seventh week: Up from 10 A.M. to 5 P.M. May go downstairs at noon and remain there until after dinner.

Eighth to tenth week: Same.

Eleventh week: Downstairs for meals. One-half hour walk out-of-doors in the afternoon.

Eleventh to fifteenth week: Same, but increase walk to one hour by the end of the 15th week.

Notes: Keep a temperature chart for the first eight weeks. Full diet. Continue tablets of cevitamic acid (60 mg. daily).

Viewing the soft systolic murmur that was heard over the mitral area of this patient on admission in the light of the typical findings, we cannot say that it is functional, even in the absence of cardiac enlargement. During the early days of the infection when a high fever was present, the murmur may have been functional in the sense that it was produced in a toxic myocardium by relaxation of the mitral ring. Actual inflammatory changes may have already developed in the valve, distorting its leaflets and directly interfering with its function. When these murmurs persist during the months following convalescence, it is reasonable to suppose that they are caused by disease of the mitral valve itself. Mitral regurgitation should then be the tentative diagnosis, especially if cardiac enlargement can be demonstrated. It is true that the diagnosis of mitral regurgitation is very rarely upheld at necropsy. However, it is equally true that patients do not succumb during this stage of the disease. Survival permits contraction and healing of the valve leaflets to take place, and mitral stenosis develops. Consequently, if signs of stenosis are discovered in a patient suffering from acute rheumatic fever, previous attacks should be suspected.

#### RHEUMATIC HEART DISEASE WITH AORTIC REGURGITATION, NO SIGNS OF ACTIVE INFECTION AND SLIGHT CARDIAC ENLARGEMENT

**Case 11.** F. N., a 16-year-old school boy was sent to the cardiac clinic at the Woman's College Hospital in January, 1931. A heart murmur had been discovered by the school physician.

**HISTORY.** Negative for rheumatism. All previous physical examinations were negative. No symptoms were present referable to the cardiovascular system. The patient had always been active in school athletics, and the exercise tolerance was good.

**PHYSICAL EXAMINATION.** B.P. 130/60. Apex beat in the midclavicular line 8.5 cm. to the left of the midsternal line in the fifth interspace. The pulse was 80 and of the Corrigan type and the rhythm was regular. There was a blowing diastolic murmur along the left sternal border.

**LABORATORY DATA.** Wassermann negative. Blood count normal. One urinalysis negative. Sedimentation rate normal. The orthodiagram (Fig. 60A) showed slight cardiac enlargement. The cardiothoracic ratio was 0.46, the transverse cardiac diameter was 12.9 cm. (predicted 11.8 cm.) and the cardiac area was 129 sq. cm. (predicted 115 sq. cm.). The electrocardiogram (Fig. 60B) showed slight flattening of T<sub>1</sub>. There was no axis deviation.

**CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS.** A. Etiologic: Rheumatic. Inactive. B. Anatomic. Slight cardiac enlargement: Aortic regurgitation. C. Physiologic. Normal sinus rhythm. D. Functional. Classification: Class 1. Therapeutic Classification: Class B.

**Discussion.** Watching this lad over the course of the nine years that he has been visiting our clinic has been most instructive. When he first came to us during the winter of 1931, he presented the typical picture of aortic

regurgitation. No signs of mitral disease were elicited, and to confuse the issue further, he gave no history of rheumatic infection.

The initial study showed the absence of cardiac enlargement, a flat  $T_1$  in the electrocardiogram, a negative Wassermann, and a very good exercise tolerance. Since the majority of patients who have organic heart disease at this age belong to the rheumatic group, he was tentatively placed in this category and tests were made to rule out the presence of activity. Again, blood studies, including a leukocyte count and sedimentation rate, were normal. He was gaining weight and aside from his cardiac lesion appeared to be in excellent physical condition. He was advised to discontinue basketball, but no other restrictions were imposed.

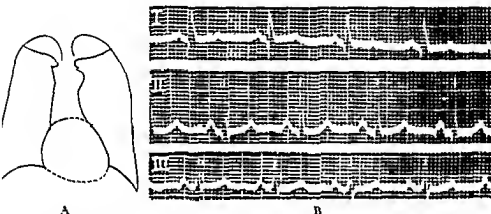


FIG 60 A The orthodiagram shows slight cardiac enlargement. Note prominent aortic knob.

B. The electrocardiogram. There is slight flattening of  $T_1$ . The P-waves are widened in lead 2. There is no axis deviation.

Although our suggestions were carried out by the school authorities, the patient admitted at each visit that he was participating in competitive sports of all kinds. There was no dyspnea. As the years went by, we felt less concern when we noted that the heart size and other features of the examination remained exactly the same as initially recorded.

For eight years this boy has enjoyed unrestricted activity and has taken part in competitive sports against advice. However, our protests in recent years have been milder, when we observed the absence of any demonstrable ill effect. The exercise that we prohibited appears to have added to his mental and physical well-being. At the age of 24 his chief dangers appear to be the chance development of subacute bacterial endocarditis on the previously damaged heart valve and the recurrence of the rheumatic infection. As he grows older, the latter danger becomes much less, although unfortunately, the former possibility remains.

During the time this patient has been under our care, no routine medication of any kind has been prescribed. A tonsillectomy was performed

during the first summer, and he has had a routine dental examination every six months.

# RHEUMATIC HEART DISEASE—ACTIVE INFECTION—DEATH FROM CONGESTIVE FAILURE AT UNUSUALLY EARLY AGE—AUTOPSY

**Case 12.** E. W., a male infant of  $3\frac{1}{2}$  years was admitted to the Philadelphia General Hospital on 6/7/37 and died on 6/11/37. Chief complaints on admission were fever and frequent nose bleeds.

**HISTORY.** Bronchopneumonia at  $2\frac{1}{2}$  months, whooping cough at one year and measles at the age of two. Two months prior to admission the patient began to have fever at night and there was a steady weight loss. Frequent, severe nose bleeds followed and continued until the day of admission.

**PHYSICAL EXAMINATION** showed an acutely ill child, pale, slightly cyanotic and poorly nourished. T. 101. P. 120. R. 35. Pale conjunctivae, teeth carious. The tonsils were large and cryptic. The lungs were clear. The heart was enlarged to the right and left. The apex was well beyond the midclavicular line where a diastolic thrill was palpable. A blowing systolic murmur and a rumbling diastolic murmur were heard in the mitral area. A to and fro murmur and a systolic thrill were present over the aortic area. The liver was palpable four fingers below the costal margin. The fingers and toes were short and stubby. Rheumatic nodules were palpable on the right knee and the left ankle.

**LABORATORY DATA.** Urine negative. Blood hemoglobin, 49 per cent (Sahli), R.B.C. 2,700,000; W.B.C. 9,000. Sedimentation rate, 28 mm. in one hour. The roentgenogram showed cardiac enlargement in all diameters.

**CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS.** A. Etiologic: Rheumatic Active. B. Anatomic: Cardiac enlargement. Aortic stenosis and insufficiency. Mitral stenosis and insufficiency. C. Physiologic: Normal sinus rhythm. Congestive failure. D. Functional Classification: Class 4. Therapeutic Classification: Class E.

**Discussion.** Evidence of an active rheumatic infection was present on the first examination. In addition to the signs of an unusual degree of cardiac involvement in one so young, the cyanosis, dyspnea, and large liver pointed to congestive failure.

In the presence of acute carditis, the mechanical strain of the valvular lesions has a much less important place. Congestive failure, when it occurs in children, is usually in itself evidence of activity, and if carefully searched for, the signs will be brought to light. In this child, rheumatic nodules were palpable on admission.

In cases where the overwhelming infection precipitates cardiac failure, digitalis is of doubtful value. Nevertheless, it should always be given (page 84).

Since cyanosis was marked, the child was placed in an oxygen tent, which seemed to have little influence on the course of the disease. The respiratory rate mounted, and the congestive manifestations increased. One-half cc. of mercupurin in 10 cc. of saline was given intravenously but had little effect. Death occurred on the fourth hospital day.

**AUTOPSY.** The heart (Fig. 61A and B) weighed 150 Gm. The epicardium was gray and glistening. The myocardium was moderately flabby and contained numerous delicate gray streaks and pin-point bright pink areas, especially near the endocardial surface. The auricular endocardial surface was thick and opaque. The free edges of the mitral valve were thickened and scarred. The mitral chordae were thickened, shortened and adherent. The aortic orifice was narrowed, just admitting a small wire probe. The aortic



leaflets were thickened, rigid, and firmly glued together. The valves on the right side of the heart appeared normal. The foramen ovale was closed. The coronary vessels were normal.



FIG. 61. Rheumatic heart disease. There is a characteristic shortening and fusion of the aortic leaflets resulting in stenosis and insufficiency. (Autopsy No. 33,574, Philadelphia General Hospital.)

#### RHEUMATIC HEART DISEASE WITH MITRAL STENOSIS AND CONGESTIVE FAILURE—INFLUENCE OF MULTIPLE PULMONARY EMBOLI ON COURSE AND PROGNOSIS

**CASE 13.** Mrs. A. H., a white housewife of 52, was admitted to the Philadelphia General Hospital on 2/13/34 complaining of cough, shortness of breath and swelling of the legs.

**HISTORY.** Increasing dyspnea during the past year. A week before admission edema of the legs developed and was followed by chest pain, cough, and hemoptysis. Her mother had "Tb and heart trouble." No history of rheumatic infection. The patient considered herself in good health until a year before admission.

**PHYSICAL EXAMINATION.** P. 120 (irregular). BP. 145/90. Jaundice was present. The neck veins were distended. There were rales at both lung bases. There was edema of the legs to the hips.

The heart was enlarged. L.B. 13.0 cm. to the left of the midsternal line. There was a short diastolic murmur over the region of the apex beat. The liver edge was distinctly palpable 7 cm. below the costal margin in spite of distention and shifting dullness in the abdomen (Fig. 62A).

The electrocardiogram showed auricular fibrillation with a rapid ventricular rate (Fig. 62B).

**CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS.** A. Etiologic: Rheumatic. Inactive. B. Anatomic: Cardiac hypertrophy. Mitral stenosis and insufficiency. C. Physiologic: Auricular fibrillation. Congestive cardiac failure. D. Functional Classification: Class 4. Therapeutic Classification: Class E.

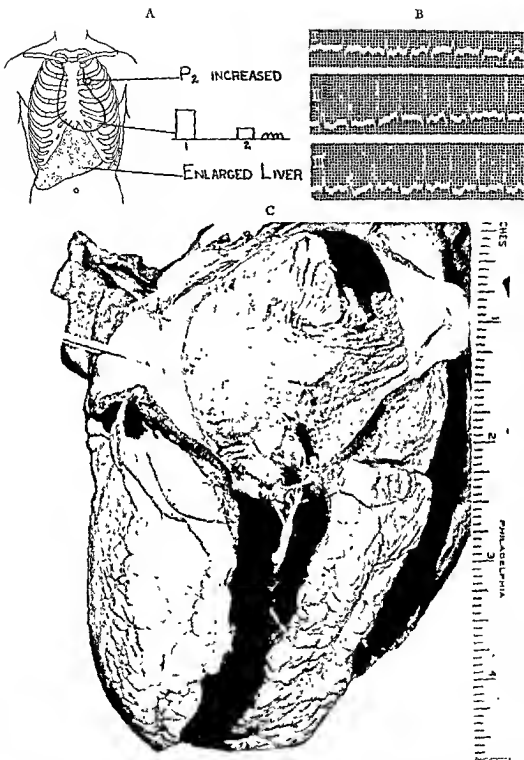


FIG. 62. A. Chart of physical findings. B The electrocardiogram. Auricular fibrillation is present with a rapid ventricular rate.

C. Rheumatic heart disease. Mitral stenosis is present with marked dilatation of the left auricle. Note that the size of the auricle is nearly equal to that of the ventricle. (Autopsy No. 27,083, Philadelphia General Hospital.)

mitral disease, accentuating the signs of congestive failure and rendering the patient so refractory to treatment, does not always follow embolism. Quite often, conditions in the pulmonary circuit predispose to thrombosis. There is usually present a sclerosis of the lung vessels, and when a slowing of the blood current through them occurs during the early stages of heart failure, spontaneous clotting is favored. An infarct then develops, its size



FIG. 63. Hemorrhagic infarct of the lung.

depending on the caliber of the vessel obstructed. At times the discovery of dulness over these areas of infarction in a patient who shows fever and other signs of an active rheumatic process leads to a diagnosis of rheumatic pneumonia. Again in cases where the onset is sudden and the area of infarction large, the diagnosis of a lobar pneumonia may be made, especially if chest pain, a temperature elevation, hemoptysis, and a pleural friction rub appear.

The course of rheumatic heart disease is often complicated by embolism, after the onset of auricular fibrillation, at which time considerable hypertrophy of the atrial musculature is generally present. Under these circumstances the detachment of a part of a thrombus and its lodgment in the

lung is not unusual. Pulmonary embolism may also follow thrombosis in one of the large pelvic or thigh veins, although the exact site of origin may be unrecognizable clinically.

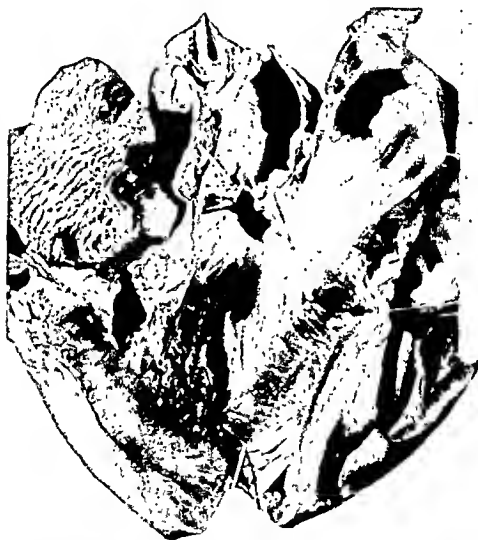


FIG. 64 Rheumatic heart disease. Note cardiac hypertrophy, aortic and mitral stenosis. The aortic valve (marked by arrow) is viewed from the side. Its leaflets are fused and thickened. A large thrombus with a rippled surface almost completely fills the left auricle. The mitral orifice (seen below the thrombus) is sclerotic and contracted. (Autopsy No. 10,162, Philadelphia General Hospital.)

The auricular appendages are the common locations for thrombus formation. In some cases we may be unable to prove the point of origin of the embolus if no clot is found at autopsy, while in others the whole auricle may be filled with thrombus (Fig. 64). Occasionally following coronary

thrombosis, mural thrombi may form in the left ventricle (see Fig. 109). These particles may become detached and find their way into the systemic or cerebral circulation, with serious consequences. Ulcerative plaques in patients with advanced arteriosclerosis are often the sites of formation of thrombi that may eventually become dislodged. Aneurysms or injured vessels likewise may be the starting points of emboli. In chronic valvular disease, it is rare for emboli to arise from the vegetations on the heart valves, while the auricular source is quite common. On the other hand, in acute and subacute bacterial endocarditis, fragments frequently become detached from the valves, and since the mitral and aortic valves are involved most often, the embolic signs appear in the systemic circulation.

### RHEUMATIC HEART DISEASE—MITRAL STENOSIS—EMBOLIC MANIFESTATIONS

**Case 14.** M. M., a 30-year-old white clerk, was first seen in July, 1936, complaining of cough and shortness of breath. He had been well until two days before when he developed a severe head cold. This was followed by fever and cough, and he noticed for the first time that his feet were swollen and that his pulse was rapid and irregular. He gave a history of two attacks of chorea, the first at the age of seven, and the second at the age of 13.

**PHYSICAL EXAMINATION.** Temperature 100° F. There was a totally irregular pulse of 120, and the respiratory rate was 32. The blood pressure was 120/80. Scattered râles were present in both lung bases. There was pitting edema of both ankles. The heart was slightly enlarged to the left. The first sound was accentuated in the region of the apex, and a mid-diastolic murmur was heard in the same area. P2 was accentuated.

**CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS.** A. Etiologic: Rheumatic (Chorea) Inactive (?) B. Anatomic: Cardiac enlargement. Mitral stenosis and regurgitation. C. Physiologic: Auricular fibrillation. Congestive cardiac failure. D. Functional Classification: Class 4. Therapeutic Classification: Class E.

**Discussion.** The patient was placed at bed rest at home, and complete digitalization was accomplished in three days (page 82). Codeine sulfate 0.03 Gm. ( $\frac{1}{2}$  grain) and ammonium chloride 1.0 Gm. (15 grains) were given every four hours. On the second day 1 cc. of mercupurin was given intravenously. These measures were sufficient to dispel all signs of congestive failure and to lower the pulse rate to 75 (see Fig. 247B). On the fourth day, the digitalis was decreased to 0.1 Gm. ( $\frac{1}{2}$  grains) of the whole leaf daily. At the beginning of the third week, the patient was allowed to return to work on a restricted program.

During the course of the next three years, he was examined every three months. The auricular fibrillation continued, but no signs of congestive failure were discovered at any time. His exercise tolerance was fair.

In August, 1939, following another upper respiratory infection, the patient again developed cough, but on this occasion there was hemoptysis. The pulse rate rose to 130, and digitalis appeared to be ineffective in controlling the fibrillation. Bed rest and mercurial diuretics, however, were finally successful in restoring the balance. In five weeks the congestive failure disappeared, and the dyspnea improved. Digitalis 0.1 Gm. ( $\frac{1}{2}$

grains) daily and ammonium chloride 1.0 Gm. (15 grains) three times daily were continued.

One month later, while at work, he experienced a sudden pain in the left leg, accompanied by numbness and coldness. He was removed to the hospital at once. At an emergency operation, removal of an embolus from the left femoral artery at the site of origin of the profunda was successfully accomplished. However, the patient died suddenly the next day, following a cerebral embolism. An autopsy was not obtainable.

This patient presents the picture of chronic rheumatic heart disease with mitral stenosis. The infection occurred early in childhood, but no symptoms were present for over 17 years. Death occurred three years after the onset of symptoms.

The first attack of congestive failure appeared rather suddenly following an acute upper respiratory infection, which is not at all unusual. Infection of this type is a much more common cause of a break in compensation than overwork, although there is a widespread belief that the opposite is true. There was no relighting of the rheumatic process inasmuch as compensation was quickly restored, and the temperature returned to normal in a few days.

Digitalis was begun when congestive failure first appeared and was continued in a maintenance dose to keep the ventricular rate between 70 and 75 until the patient's death three years later. In his case the amount needed was 0.1 Gm. (1½ grains) daily.

Many cases of chronic rheumatic heart disease pursue a similar slow course over many years with occasional breaks in compensation that respond quickly to bed rest and intensive treatment. Such a course is possible, but is less often observed in cases of arteriosclerotic and hypertensive heart disease, while it is quite unusual in cases of syphilitic heart disease.

This patient's final illness was again ushered in by respiratory symptoms. However, this time he had hemoptysis and although there was nothing on physical examination to prove pulmonary infarction, the history suggested this possibility. Pulmonary infarction also accounted for the poor response to therapy on this occasion and changed the prognosis, since we were prepared to expect recurrence of the accident in the same or other locations. A month later, an embolus from the dilated left auricle found its way into the left femoral artery. Emergency surgical measures were successful, but a day later cerebral embolism caused the patient's death.

The patient, whose heart is shown in Fig. 64, was a white male of 33 who died following a clinical course quite similar to that of the patient just described. The heart here is enormously enlarged with mitral-, aortic-, and tricuspid-valve involvement, the mitral and aortic valves showing an advanced stenosis. The greatly dilated left auricle is completely filled by a large ball-valve thrombus. This complication of the rheumatic valvular disease was the direct cause of death that occurred suddenly six weeks after admission to the hospital.

A similar happening is shown in Fig. 65. This patient was a white female

of 36 who had suffered from rheumatic heart disease since the age of seven. During the last eight years of her life, breaks in compensation occurred, associated with recurrences of the rheumatic infection. She showed excellent response to the usual therapy and was able to carry on her work until the



FIG. 65. Rheumatic heart disease with mitral stenosis. A massive thrombus occupies the whole of the dilated left auricle. (Autopsy No. 33,699. Philadelphia General Hospital.)

day she was admitted to the Philadelphia General Hospital. Death occurred suddenly and unexpectedly seven hours after admission, and autopsy showed advanced mitral stenosis and a greatly distended left auricle entirely filled with thrombus, which was white in the center and reddened at the periphery. There were concentric laminations. The entire thrombus meas-

ured  $5 \times 6 \times 8$  cm. Rarely these masses of clot may undergo complete organization with the formation of either pedunculated or ball-valve thrombi (Fig. 66). Occasionally these smooth loose bodies are discovered at postmortem in the auricular chamber, always larger than the stenosed mitral orifice which they may at times acutely obstruct.<sup>92</sup> In some patients

this intermittent obstruction may give rise to characteristic symptoms that arouse suspicion of the presence of a ball-valve thrombus. Changes in the circulation in both upper and lower extremities may take place and progress rapidly to the formation of small areas

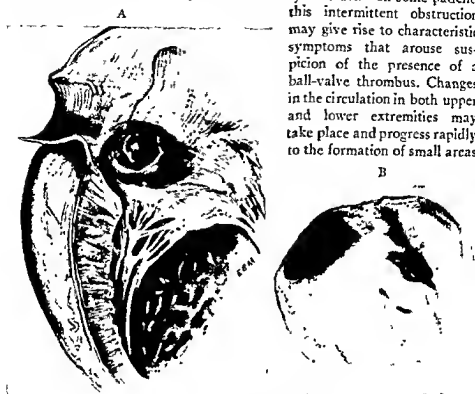


FIG. 66. A. Ball thrombus in left auricle.  
B. Ball-valve thrombus.

of gangrene in the fingers and toes. Full restoration of the circulation in these areas may occur suddenly if the pressure of the ball thrombus is released, in which event the color and temperature of the arms and legs quickly return to normal. Syncopal attacks may appear when a ball-valve thrombus occludes the valvular orifice, and sudden death is always a possibility.

#### RHEUMATIC HEART DISEASE OF LONG DURATION COMPLICATED BY AURICULAR FIBRILLATION, PULMONARY EMBOLI AND ATTACKS OF PAROXYSMAL DYSPNEA

**Case 15.** Mrs. M. J., an American housewife of 51, was first seen in December, 1937, complaining of palpitation and dyspnea.

**HISTORY.** The patient was well until two years prior to the first examination when dyspnea appeared on exertion. About the same time she noticed palpitation and slight ankle edema in the evening. There had been a 40-pound weight loss since the onset of illness. At the age of 10 she had her first attack of rheumatic fever and was confined to bed for two months.



**PHYSICAL EXAMINATION.** B.P. 150/80. Pulse rate 100. Rhythm totally irregular. Slight cyanosis and moderate ankle edema.

**Heart:** marked enlargement by percussion both to the right and to the left. The apex impulse was palpable in the sixth interspace in the anterior axillary line. There was a blowing systolic murmur and a mid-diastolic rumbling murmur heard over the apex. A systolic murmur was heard over the aortic area.

**LABORATORY DATA.** Blood count: hemoglobin, 82 per cent (Sahli), R.B.C., 3,800,000; W.B.C., 8,000. Wassermann negative.

The electrocardiogram showed auricular fibrillation (Fig. 67B). The roentgenogram showed cardiac enlargement in all diameters (Fig. 67A).

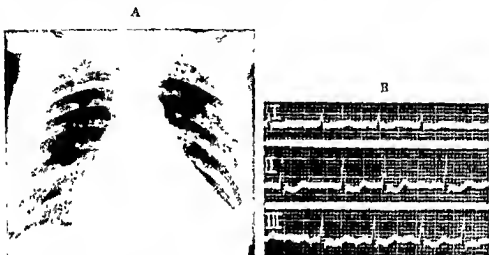


FIG. 67. A. Roentgen film of chest. There is cardiac enlargement with mitralization. Note the congestion of the pulmonary vessels and multiple pulmonary infarcts.

B. Auricular fibrillation. The ventricular rate is well controlled by digitalis. The action of this drug is also evident in the depression of the S-T Intervals in leads 2 and 3.

**Discussion.** The weight loss described by this patient was evident on physical examination. Not infrequently patients with a long standing cardiac lesion will show loss of weight following anorexia that attends congestion in the portal system. In others, the poor blood supply may interfere with proper nutrition of essential structures, and wasting gradually appears (*cardiac cachexia*).

Treatment of this patient was begun by two-weeks bed rest. During this time she was digitalized, and the ventricular rate reduced to 70. She was then allowed to be out of bed and about the house. The dyspnea improved, and the edema did not recur. The dyspnea always returned, however, when further activity was permitted, but on a markedly restricted program and maintenance digitalis, she was kept fairly comfortable for a year.

In December, 1938, mild spells of paroxysmal dyspnea appeared following excitement or more than the usual amount of exercise. McGinn and White<sup>247</sup> attribute these spells of pulmonary congestion that appear in patients with mitral stenosis to the strength of the right ventricle which in

certain situations pumps more blood into the lungs than can be passed through the mitral valve in time to prevent a stasis. Evidence of the congested state of the lungs is furnished on these occasions by the appearance of râles and frothy bloody sputum. If the right ventricle does not bear up under the increased load, congestion often follows in the portal system with cyanosis, large liver, and edema.

These paroxysms became more frequent and distressing during the next few months. The more severe attacks were controlled by injections of morphine sulfate, 0.015 Gm. ( $\frac{1}{4}$  grain). Finally, during one of the seizures, the patient developed a sharp chest pain that was followed by hemoptysis. Dyspnea and other signs of congestive failure appeared on the scene very promptly. No doubt the slowing of the blood current in the lungs produced by the delay in emptying favored thrombosis. The resulting infarct was a large one, judging by the extent of the physical signs that were evident a few days later in the left lower chest. During the next six weeks there were two additional attacks of pulmonary thrombosis, similar to the one just described. Each occurred as the patient was showing some improvement in breathing and other signs of congestive failure.

Following the last attack, injections of mercupurin were given every fifth day regardless of the presence of visible edema. Ammonium chloride was started at the same time and continued in 1.0 Gm. (15 grains) doses after meals. Improvement now was gradual but was maintained, and the patient managed to regain her former level of exercise tolerance. Following this restricted program and continuing the digitalis and diuretic maintenance dosage, the patient has had no recurrence of her pulmonary symptoms for over a year and a half.

#### RHEUMATIC HEART DISEASE WITH MITRAL STENOSIS—THE INFLUENCE OF HYPERTENSION ON THE COURSE OF THE DISEASE

**Case 16.** Mrs. F. W., a housewife of 55, was first seen in June, 1937, at which time she complained of shortness of breath, palpitation and edema. These symptoms had all been present and increasing in severity for four months. The patient had two attacks of rheumatic fever in childhood. In 1930 a subtotal thyroidectomy was performed because of palpitation, nervousness and loss of weight.

**PHYSICAL EXAMINATION.** Blood pressure 260/110. Dyspnea, cyanosis, and edema of both legs to the knees were present, and there was marked distention of the jugular veins.

**Heart.** totally irregular rhythm, rate 120. The left base measured 11.5 cm. and the right 4.0 cm. There was an accentuation of the first sound over the apex and a mid-diastolic murmur. There was a systolic murmur as well as an accentuation of the second sound over the aortic area. There were no thrills palpable. The liver was enlarged to the umbilicus. Râles were present in both lung bases.

**LABORATORY DATA.** Wassermann negative. Urine showed a trace of albumin and a fixed specific gravity of 1.010 on several occasions. Blood count normal. Basal metabolic rate plus 7 per cent.

The electrocardiogram showed on first examination a rapid auricular fibrillation (Fig. 68B). Digitalis reduced the rate and inverted the S-T intervals.

The roentgenogram (Fig. 68A) showed enlargement of all cardiac diameters.

**CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS.** A. Etiologic: Rheumatic. (Inactive.) Hypertension. B. Anatomic: Cardiac hypertrophy. Mitral stenosis. Mitral regurgitation. C. Physiologic: Auricular

fibrillation. Congestive cardiac failure. D. Functional Classification; Class 3. Therapeutic Classification; Class E.

A



B

FIG. 68. A. Roentgen film. Note marked cardiac enlargement all diameters.

B. The first strip (lead 1) taken 6/27/37 shows presence of auricular fibrillation. The second strip (same lead) taken 5/26/39 shows a marked slowing of the ventricular rate to 58 with inversion of S-T intervals.

**Discussion.** The course of the rheumatic heart disease in this patient was complicated first of all by the appearance of thyrotoxicosis at the age of 48. She developed palpitation and dyspnea, a slight enlargement of the thyroid, exophthalmos, tremor, nervousness, and loss of weight. The basal metabolic rate was plus 45.

Following a subtotal thyroidectomy, the cardiac symptoms were much improved, and her exercise tolerance increased. During the next seven

years, there was a gain in weight of 25 pounds. In 1936, before the cardiac symptoms reappeared, the patient was told by her physician that she had high blood pressure.

In 1937, her blood pressure measured 260/110, and mild congestive failure was present. She was digitalized and proper maintenance dosage continued, and in addition she was given elixir of phenobarbital, 4 cc. (one dram) after meals. A program regulating her daily activities which included a part-time maid in the household, a two-hour rest period every afternoon and ten hours in bed at night was prescribed. A diet only slightly higher than her basal requirements was advised.

For nearly three years her status has remained unchanged. The heart is still greatly enlarged (Fig. 68A), but she has managed to be about on the same restricted program, although the slightest increase in activity causes marked dyspnea.

Over half of the patients who have mitral stenosis develop high blood pressure when they pass the age of 45, which is an interesting fact when we consider that the blood pressures of the younger patients with mitral stenosis tend to be subnormal. Does the long standing rheumatic disease produce organic changes that eventually result in hypertension? Certainly the mitral lesion in these patients cannot be ascribed to the hypertension, since stenosis of this valve is never produced by an arteriosclerotic process.

It is a very remarkable fact that the blood pressure in this patient is continually maintained at levels well over 200 systolic in the presence of an advanced mitral stenotic lesion. However, there is no reason why the factor that produces hypertension cannot be operative when the patient with the proper hereditary background reaches the age of 45, irrespective of the presence of a mitral stenosis.

Levine's observations<sup>218</sup> indicate that the development of hypertension may actually be a helpful mechanism in these patients who have mitral stenosis. He points to the fact that the majority of them have a life expectancy below 50 unless hypertension develops. The hypertensive process dilates the left ventricle, and this tends to counteract the effect of the rheumatic mitral lesion. In this way there may be a balance restored between the mitral stenosis and the hypertension since the mitral lesion causes a right-sided and the hypertension a left-sided hypertrophy. Consequently, when failure arises from a prolonged strain on the right side of the heart in mitral stenosis, the beneficial effect of a process tending to produce a left-sided hypertrophy can be understood.

#### RHEUMATIC HEART DISEASE WITH LESIONS OF ALL VALVES—PROLONGED COURSE OF THERAPY—AUTOPSY

Case 17. Mrs. I. M., a white housewife of 40, had many hospital admissions over the course of five years because of recurring attacks of congestive failure. Her chief complaints were shortness of breath and swelling of the abdomen. There was no history of rheumatic fever in childhood.

**PHYSICAL EXAMINATION.** There was marked dyspnea, slight cyanosis, and ascites. The latter increased in amount on each admission. Toward the end, abdominal taps were performed every second week, and the average amount of fluid removed was 5000 cc. On the last admission there was also fluid in the right pleural cavity.

The heart showed considerable hypertrophy. The right base measured 5.0 cm. and the left 14.0 cm. Systolic thrills and systolic and diastolic murmurs were present over the aortic, pulmonic and mitral areas. The rhythm was totally irregular, with a rate of 100 to 120. B.P. 108/80.

**CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS.** A. Etiologic: Rheumatic. Inactive. B. Anatomic: Cardiac enlargement. Mitral, aortic and pulmonic regurgitation and stenosis. C. Physiologic: Congestive cardiac failure. Auricular fibrillation. D. Functional Classification: Class 4. Therapeutic Classification: Class E.

**AUTOPSY.** Dilatation of the heart especially of the auricles. The right ventricle occupied the entire ventral surface of the heart. The coronaries were normal. The mural endocardium was thick, white, and opaque in the auricles. The mitral valve showed typical fish-mouth orifice with greatly thickened valve leaflets. The auricular surface was studded with calcific excrescences the size of a pin head and organized vegetations. The papillary muscle was fibrosed. The aortic cusps were shortened and thickened with dense adhesions at the commissures creating marked stenosis and insufficiency (Fig. 69A). Moderate stenosis was present at the pulmonic valve and the cusps presented rolled edges slightly adherent to the commissures (Fig. 69B). The tricuspid valve leaflets were thickened and densely adherent with the free edges rolled. The chordae tendinae were shortened and thickened.

**Discussion.** Involvement of all the valves of the heart is rare. When an organic tricuspid lesion is present, the mitral and aortic valves are usually the seat of advanced changes, consequently it is often difficult to evaluate the effects of the tricuspid regurgitation and stenosis on the heart.

In this patient separate thrills and murmurs were recognized over the mitral, aortic, and pulmonic areas, but the findings, as is quite often the case, were confusing over the tricuspid area. Systolic and diastolic murmurs were heard over the lower end of the sternum, but it was felt that these were transmitted from the mitral area. When more than one valve of the heart is damaged by the rheumatic infection, the valves on the left side of the heart are as a general rule involved earlier and to a greater degree than those on the right side. The order of frequency is usually mitral, aortic, tricuspid, and pulmonic.

The course of the disease in this case was typical.<sup>100</sup> Hospitalization was required many times during the five years that symptoms were present. The patient received active treatment on each occasion and sufficient circulatory balance was restored in a short time to permit her discharge. However, she did not follow a strict regime between admissions. There was always a mild degree of congestion present. The easily provoked dyspnea, the mild cyanosis, the distended jugulars, the marked ascites, and the chronically engorged and pulsating liver should have suggested a tricuspid lesion. The auricular fibrillation present in this case was also consistent with the diagnosis.

Between attacks of congestive failure, these advanced circulatory alterations caused the patient very little discomfort. Her margin was a very slim one, and the balance difficult to maintain, since the slightest over-

exertion very quickly accentuated the cyanosis, dyspnea, and other evidences of venous stasis.

The management of a patient of this type is described on page 112.

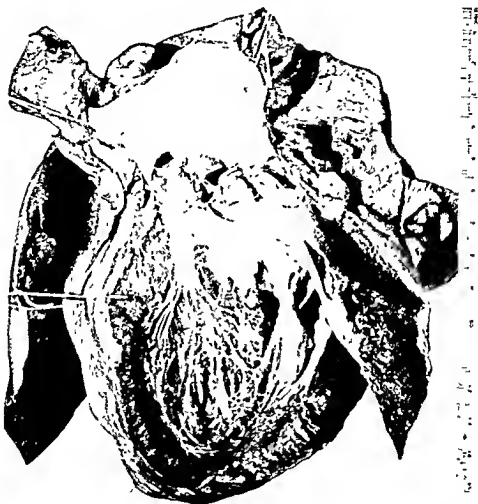


FIG. 69 A Rheumatic heart disease. Note marked distortion of the aortic cusps. (Autopsy No. 27,944. Philadelphia General Hospital)

#### RHEUMATIC HEART DISEASE AND CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM SYPHILIS— MANAGEMENT

**Case 18.** L. H., an American salesman of 32, was first seen on March 30, 1939, complaining of increasing shortness of breath and dull pain over the heart of six months' duration. For the past two months he noticed occasional shooting pains in the legs and nervousness. The past history was negative for rheumatism. Chancre at the age of 20.

**PHYSICAL EXAMINATION** showed irregular pupils; the right was larger than the left, but both failed to react to light. **ALL SUPERFICIAL REFLEXES WERE ABSENT, EVEN UPON REINFORCEMENT.**

Heart: Enlarged. L.B. 11.5 cm. from the midclavicular line. Right base 3.0 cm. from M.C.L. Rough systolic and long rumbling diastolic murmurs were heard over the apex. A2 louder than P2. Thrill at the apex. Rhythm regular (Fig. 70A).



FIG. 69. B. Chronic rheumatic endocarditis of the pulmonary valve. Note thickened, rolled edges slightly adherent to commissures (Autopsy No. 27,944 Philadelphia General Hospital)

LABORATORY DATA. Blood and spinal fluid Wassermann reactions positive. Electrocardiogram (Fig. 70B) showed widened P-waves; otherwise normal.

CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS. Central nervous system syphilis. Rheumatic heart disease with cardiac enlargement and mitral stenosis.

Discussion. Although at times rheumatic may be mistaken for syphilitic aortic disease (Case 30), and in some instances it may be impossible to

determine the exact cause of regurgitation at the aortic orifice (Case 27), this patient should have caused no diagnostic difficulty.

In the first place, the physical signs elicited on cardiac examination point to involvement of the mitral valve, since an apical diastolic murmur accompanied by a sharp snapping first sound are usually characteristic of

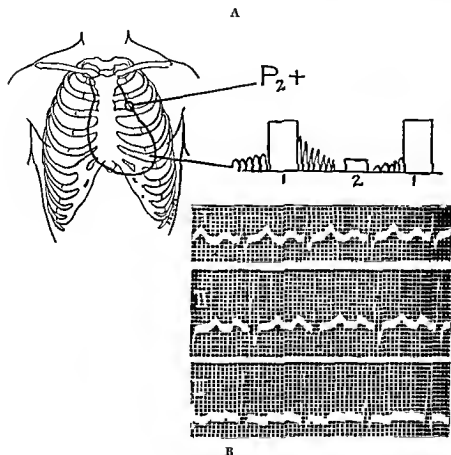


FIG. 70. A. Chart showing type and location of murmurs

B. The electrocardiogram. Note increase in the duration of the P-waves.

mitral stenosis. This lesion is always rheumatic. Diastolic murmurs at the apex may at times be associated with a syphilitic aortic regurgitation (Austin Flint murmur). In these cases the first sound of the heart will lack the snapping quality of mitral stenosis, and the evidence of a marked aortic regurgitation will also be present.

Again, the age of the patient is a point in favor of the diagnosis of rheumatic heart disease. Although it is possible to have clinical signs of cardiovascular syphilis at this patient's age, the majority of cases are seen after 35.



The presence of a definite history of syphilitic infection and the absence of a rheumatic history are both compatible with the diagnosis of rheumatic heart disease, since about 50 per cent of the patients of this age who have established mitral stenosis will not give a history of any form of rheumatic infection.

It may be possible that there is a combination of syphilitic and rheumatic heart disease in this patient, for this association is now believed to be a little more common than was once thought. However, we have nothing whatsoever upon which to base the diagnosis of syphilitic involvement in the absence of both systolic and diastolic murmurs over the aortic area. The aortic second sound is not accentuated, and careful fluoroscopic examination shows the aortic diameter is not increased. There is likewise no increase in the density of the aorta.

At the present time there is no treatment required for the heart. From the standpoint of the syphilitic infection, the evidence points to the need of immediate treatment designed to prevent the progress of this disease in the central nervous system. This is quite different from the plan that should be outlined when the cardiac study suggests an early spirochetal invasion; consequently an understanding of the findings and prompt recognition of the type of heart disease present are extremely important.

Under proper therapy for neurosyphilis, this patient's progress should be good. Careful routine cardiac studies should be carried out, and future therapy directed toward protecting the cardiovascular system (page 214). This patient offers no cardiac contraindication to the use of pyrexial treatment for his neurosyphilis. However, in older patients with degenerative cardiovascular disease as the complicating lesion, tryparsamide is the drug of choice.

## PERICARDITIS

Pericarditis undoubtedly occurs more often than is recognized. It may be acute or chronic, involving only a small area of the pericardial sac and escaping clinical detection, or it may be a readily recognized process demanding prompt and skillful management.

### ACUTE PERICARDITIS

#### ETIOLOGY

Pericarditis is usually encountered as a complication of some primary infectious process caused by pyogenic cocci (the *Pneumococcus*, *Staphylococcus*, *Streptococcus*), or the organism responsible for the acute rheumatic state. While the pericardium may be the site of a primary invasion by the tubercle bacillus, this organism more often arrives in the pericardium by extension from a neighboring focus. The involvement of the pericardium encountered in uremia, cancer, and terminal conditions is probably not infectious, although the exact cause is unknown in many cases. Following a coronary occlusion involving the outer wall of the heart, a local inflammatory area may develop in the adjacent pericardium. Rarely, trauma may be the exciting agent in pericarditis.

Acute fibrinous pericarditis is most commonly seen as a complication of acute rheumatic fever, and its frequency will depend on the incidence of rheumatic disease in the community. A serofibrinous exudate may occur in all forms of pericarditis except those that complicate acute coronary occlusion and uremia. In rheumatic infection, the fluid that comprises the pericardial effusion is generally clear but may have a slight turbidity, while following the invasion of pyogenic organisms, a purulent pericardial exudate appears. A bloody effusion (hemopericardium) suggests either malignant disease or tuberculosis. Air may be present with the effusion (pneumopericardium) when perforation accompanies malignancy of a neighboring organ, or it may enter from a pneumothorax or during a paracentesis.

Acute pericarditis may be encountered in patients of any age, but it is usually seen in young people because of the frequency of acute rheumatic infection at this time of life.

#### PATHOLOGY

When the pericardium is inflamed, the membrane rapidly loses its glossy appearance owing to the changes that occur in the epithelial surface. Fibrin then appears, and the visceral and parietal layers may become adherent

although a solid union is usually prevented by the cardiac action. When the layers of the pericardium are separated at autopsy, the typical picture known as the bread-and-butter pericardium is observed (Fig. 71). Healing may take place with only a thickening of the pericardium; or in cases where the inflammatory process has been widespread, adhesions may develop, obliterating the pericardial sac or in rare cases anchoring the heart to neighboring structures.

#### SYMPTOMS

When the inflammation extends from the pericardium to the diaphragm and pleura, pain usually results. This symptom may first call attention to



FIG. 71. Acute fibrinous pericarditis. ("Hairy heart" or *cor villosum*.)

the chest, and careful examination at this time will reveal a friction rub. While this valuable sign may be absent, its presence may remain undetected unless the physician is constantly alert and makes repeated examinations. The friction sound is usually grating and harsh and appears to be nearer the ear than the ordinary heart murmur. Firm pressure with the stethoscope may increase its intensity. It is usually first heard toward the base of the heart and along the left sternal border and is present during

systole and diastole. If loud, this friction sound may be palpable. The presence of a friction rub by no means rules out the possibility of fluid in the pericardial sac, although it usually disappears or becomes diminished in character when an effusion develops.

### SIGNS

Accumulation of fluid in the pericardial sac in amounts in excess of 500 cc. usually attracts attention to the heart. The earliest sign can usually be detected by a roentgen study, since bulgings first appear in the lower part of the cardiac silhouette. These changes may also be observed by fluoroscopy. As the effusion develops, the area of cardiac dullness increases and additional signs become evident, chief among which are the absence of cardiac pulsations under the fluoroscope and the characteristic shape of the cardiac silhouette (see Fig. 25).

If fluid is present in large quantities, it may compress the lung and produce an area of dullness in the left chest posteriorly just below the angle of the scapula. Bronchial breathing will be heard over this area (Ewart's sign). Unless pericardial effusion is kept in mind, these physical signs, including the elevated temperature and the dyspnea, suggest a diagnosis of pneumonia.

With further increase in the amount of fluid in the pericardial sac, the heart sounds become muffled. The return venous flow into the right auricle is hindered by the elevated intrapericardial pressure, and distention of the jugulars and enlargement of the liver appear. There is a fall in the blood pressure and pulse pressure. During inspiration, the radial pulse may disappear (*pulsus paradoxus*). As the venous pressure rises, the heart rate increases to compensate for the decreased diastolic filling. The patient becomes cyanotic, the veins in the neck are distended, and liver engorgement causes pain in the abdomen to appear; there is a fall in the blood pressure, and the respiratory rate is rapid. The patient leans forward seeking relief. This acute distress or cardiac tamponade is caused by large collections of fluid in the pericardial sac and calls for emergency treatment.

### PARACENTESIS OF THE PERICARDIAL SAC

There are several methods of approach to the pericardial sac, and it is well to be acquainted with the technic of each one, for in the event that adhesions block the approach to a fluid collection in one direction, another avenue may be employed successfully.

Pioneers in this field recommended and used the epigastric route and considered it more practical and less dangerous. Others use the fifth left intercostal space about 2 cm. inside the left border of percussion dullness. The pericardial sac may also be reached by passing the needle close to the sternum in the fifth left intercostal space to avoid the left internal mammary artery (Fig. 72).

**Technic.** For the epigastric route, the patient is placed in a reclining position, preferably at an angle of about 30 degrees, with his back well supported. The skin to the left of the xiphoid is sterilized with iodine and infiltrated with a 1 per cent procaine solution. A 20-gauge  $3\frac{1}{2}$ -inch needle is used, attached directly or by means of a flexible piece of rubber tubing to a 100-cc. syringe. The latter is preferable. The insertion of the needle is in an upward and inward direction for a distance of approximately  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches (Fig. 71) depending upon the build of the patient and the thickness of the layer

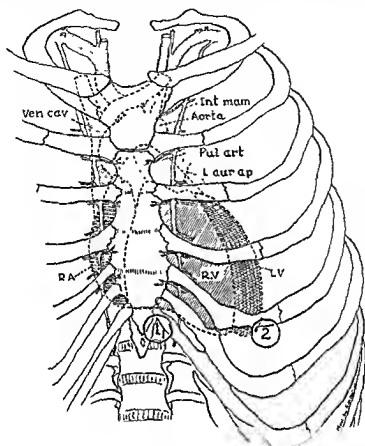


FIG. 72. Diagram showing course of the internal mammary artery and the sites for puncture of the pericardial sac.

of subcutaneous fat. The needle enters the pericardium just above the diaphragm, from which position good dependent drainage may be readily obtained. If necessary, the same site may be used for drainage by resection of portions of the fifth and sixth cartilages. It is logical to drain an effusion from its lowest position below the heart; there are no vessels to cause concern in the area traversed by the exploring needle, and the pleural and peritoneal surfaces are avoided. The advantages of the epigastric route are all the more evident if purulent pericardial collections are suspected.

If the anterior approach is used, the best point to enter is in the fifth interspace about 1-inch inside the outer border of cardiac dulness. Procaine solution should be infiltrated carefully, and the needle inserted slowly in a backward and upward direction. The needle will be felt to enter the pericardial sac when inserted about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  cm., but this distance will again vary in accordance with the thickness of the subcutaneous tissues. In this loca-

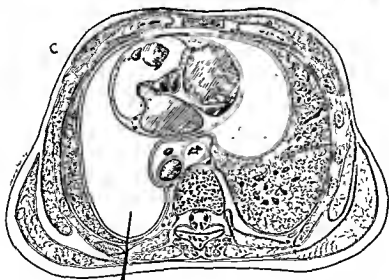
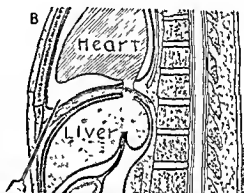
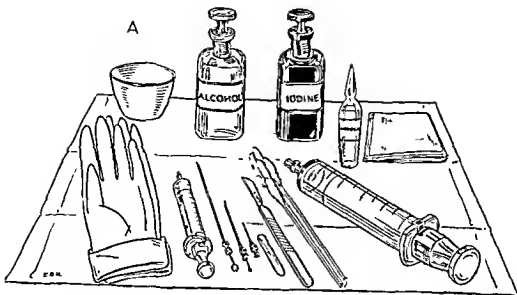


FIG. 73. Pericardial paracentesis. A. Essential equipment. B. Epigastric approach. C. Posterior approach. (See text for explanation.)

tion, it is well to use a blunt needle so that no harm may result if a coronary vessel is encountered. If the heart is felt against the exploring needle, this should cause no concern.

Pericardial paracentesis may be carried out with the suction apparatus used for thoracentesis (see Fig. 42). At times in the presence of tuberculous involvement, when subsequent roentgen studies are to be made, small quantities of air are injected into the pericardial sac following the removal of fluid. The air outlines the sac sharply and in addition may be valuable in the treatment of the tuberculous process.<sup>191</sup> However, it is unlikely that the air is of importance in the prevention of subsequent adhesions in the pericardial sac (page 177).

Puncture of the pericardial sac is not a dangerous procedure when carried out with care. If the first puncture does not reveal fluid, the direction of the exploring needle should be changed. If this approach is likewise unsuccessful, the attempt should be made to enter the pericardial sac at one of the other sites described above. I have often obtained fluid by using the epigastric route when the others have failed.<sup>206</sup> In the presence of the dense adhesions that usually accompany tuberculosis of the pericardium, the fluid may be encapsulated, in which event attempts to reach it in one direction may be unsuccessful whereas large collections may be drained at another site of puncture (see Fig. 79).

In children, in whom an inflammatory process permits greater distention of the pericardial sac, the lung may be pushed to one side or displaced, and the pericardial surface will come in contact with the chest wall posteriorly. If characteristic signs developed posteriorly, this region should be selected for puncture (see Fig. 73C). Williamson<sup>104, 405</sup> recommends that pericardial paracentesis should be used more often to relieve discomfort and guard the patient against the danger of sudden death. He uses the blood-pressure changes as a guide. Sutton<sup>300</sup> likewise recommends frequent tapplings of the pericardial sac by the posterior route and shows that it is possible to carry out the procedure without passage through lung tissue. If the posterior route is used, the needle should be inserted in the center of the area of bronchial breathing, usually about the eighth intercostal space (although the ninth or seventh interspaces may also be used) a little nearer the axilla than the spine. Since the fluid obtained is usually thick and coagulates quickly, a large bore needle is recommended.

#### SURGICAL DRAINAGE

(See page 174)

#### TUBERCULOUS PERICARDITIS

(See page 175)

#### ILLUSTRATIVE CASES

##### ACUTE FIBRINOUS PERICARDITIS DURING THE COURSE OF A RHEUMATIC INFECTION

Case 19. F. R., a 10-year-old school girl, was admitted to the Woman's College Hospital on May 6, 1936, complaining of dyspnea and fever.

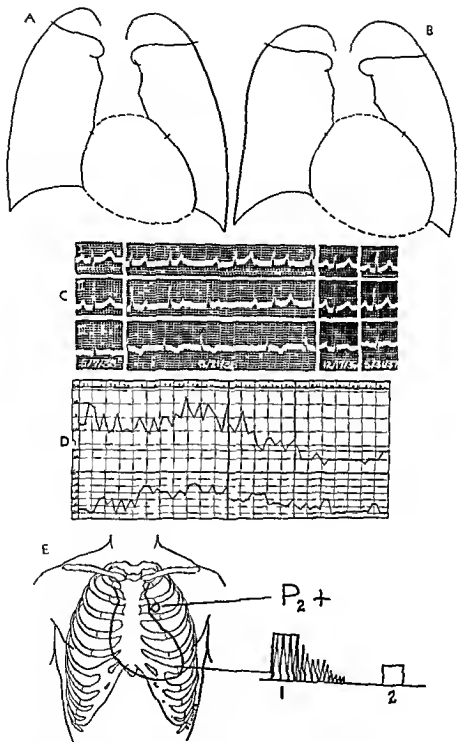


FIG. 74. A. The orthodiagram at time of discharge (September 1, 1936). Note cardiac enlargement chiefly left ventricular. B. Six months later. Note increase in heart size and mitralization.

C. The electrocardiogram. (For explanation see text.)

D. The temperature and pulse record.

E. Chart representing clinical findings.



**HISTORY.** Acute rheumatic fever two years prior to admission. The patient returned to school in two months and was well until the spring of 1936. At this time she visited her family physician who said that she was "anemic and underweight," and ordered the extraction of several teeth. Two weeks following this procedure, fever was present every evening. A week before admission there was malaise, and soreness in the muscles of the legs, and the patient was forced to remain in bed. When the fever increased and dyspnea developed, she was sent to the hospital.

**PHYSICAL EXAMINATION** showed a pale, underweight child of 10, suffering from moderate dyspnea. T. 102, P. 130, R. 35, B.P. 110/80. Jugulars not distended. The apex impulse was 1 cm. outside the midclavicular line. No thrills. There was a musical systolic murmur over the mitral area. The liver was not palpable. No edema.

**LABORATORY DATA.** Blood count hemoglobin, 60 per cent (Sahli); R.B.C., 3,400,000; W.B.C., 16,000; differential: P 80, L 20. The electrocardiogram on 5/7/36 (Fig. 74C) showed slight elevation of the S-T intervals in leads 2 and 3.

**CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS.** A. Etiologic Rheumatic. Inactive. B. Anatomic Cardiac enlargement. Mitral regurgitation. Mitral stenosis (?) Acute pericarditis (?) C. Physiologic Sinus tachycardia. D. Functional Classification Class 3 Therapeutic Classification Class E.

**Discussion.** At the time of the recurrence of the rheumatic infection, this child should not have been allowed to continue at school. Again, "anemia and underweight" does not constitute a diagnosis, although it is one very frequently made. Needless to say, the symptomatic treatment of "iron and high caloric diet" does not lead very far if the underlying rheumatic infection is not suspected, and bed rest promptly instituted. To add insult to injury, but no doubt with the thought in mind of aiding the anemia, dental extractions were advised. The operation precipitated the attack with a violence that forced the patient to bed, and it may have been the time when more extensive cardiac invasion took place.

When admitted to the hospital, the child appeared acutely ill. The degree of fever and the marked dyspnea suggested the diagnosis of pneumonia to the intern in the receiving ward. An incorrect diagnosis of this type is made more readily when a pericardial effusion compresses the left lung. The appearance of an area of dullness in the left chest below the angle of the scapula, over which bronchial breathing can often be heard, may confuse the picture further. Levine<sup>218</sup> suggests that this syndrome may explain the frequent history of childhood pneumonia in rheumatic patients.

However, this patient's lungs were clear at the time of admission, and when the long history of fever was elicited, the cardiac abnormalities helped to establish the diagnosis.

The electrocardiogram showed a slight elevation of the S-T segment but not enough to suggest the diagnosis of pericarditis.\* The P-R intervals measured 0.2 second. While this may be a perfectly normal conduction time in an adult, 0.18 second should be viewed as the upper limit of normal in a child of this age.

Two days following admission a friction rub was heard over the precordium and was especially loud along the left sternal border. This was

\* Elevation of the S-T interval should exceed 0.1 mv. to be considered abnormal.

followed in 24 hours by further prolongation of the P-R intervals (Fig. 74C). Frequent dropped beats were detected in the pulse, and on auscultation over the precordium no premature beats could be heard during the pauses.

The treatment for this patient during the first two days consisted of bed rest in the Fowler position and codeine sulfate 15 mg. ( $\frac{1}{4}$  grain) by mouth every three hours for pain. Since an ice bag over the precordium gave the patient considerable relief, it was used continuously.

The patient now appeared quite ill. The pulse rate mounted with the temperature, and the respirations became rapid and shallow. In the presence of such an overwhelming cardiac infection, digitalis was not given since no symptoms of congestive failure were evident. The friction rub disappeared in 36 hours, but the heart sounds remained distant, although no other evidence of fluid accumulation in the pericardial sac appeared.

With the disappearance of chest pain at the end of the first week, acetylsalicylic acid, 0.6 Gm. (10 grains) with an equal amount of sodium bicarbonate were given every three hours in place of the codeine. The heart rhythm became regular, and the temperature curves approached lower levels (Fig. 74D).

A more liberal diet was allowed as the temperature gradually returned to normal at the end of the fourth week. At the end of the eighth week, the patient was transferred to her home where she remained in bed another month under careful nursing care. During this time she gained ten pounds in weight and had no recurrence of fever.

When re-examined in six months, the electrocardiogram (Fig. 74C) showed no conduction defect, and the rheumatic infection appeared to be inactive. However, a faint diastolic murmur of aortic regurgitation was heard along the left sternal border, although the pulse was not of the Corrigan type. An orthodiagram at this time showed a well-established mitral stenosis and cardiac enlargement (Fig. 74B). The exercise tolerance of the patient was good, although continued restriction had given her little opportunity for much exertion.

This patient's history reveals the severity of the symptoms that usually accompany acute rheumatic pericarditis. Extensive myocardial invasion was shown by the conduction defect that appeared in the electrocardiogram. The endocardium by no means escaped, since an aortic lesion was discovered at the follow-up examination. Evidence of the pericardial involvement appeared in the form of the friction rub that was audible for 36 hours. All signs of pericardial involvement were absent at subsequent examinations, although it is too early to state with certainty that a chronic pericarditis will not develop in later years. While many still believe that rheumatism may be responsible for chronic constrictive pericarditis, White<sup>226</sup> refers to a group of 100 children with chronic rheumatic heart disease followed over a 10-year period at the House of the Good Samaritan in Boston, among whom not a single case of constrictive pericarditis has developed.

ACUTE SUPPURATIVE PERICARDITIS SECONDARY TO TYPE II PNEUMOCOCCUS  
PNEUMONIA—DRAINAGE—RECOVERY

Case 20. J. V., a school girl of 13, was seen on 1/4/38 complaining of cough and fever.

**HISTORY.** Ten days prior to admission to the hospital the patient developed fever, malaise, and cough. Four days later she had a chill followed by pain in the right lower chest and upper abdomen. The pain was increased by breathing.

**PHYSICAL EXAMINATION.** T. 101. P. 120. Dyspnea, marked. Chest expansion was diminished on the right. There was dullness to flatness in the right chest posteriorly below the angle of the scapula. The breath sounds were diminished and there were crackling râles heard over the same area. The vocal fremitus was markedly increased, and the breath sounds in the left chest were exaggerated.

The cardiac apex was in the fifth interspace in the midclavicular line. The rhythm was regular. No murmurs were heard. There was tenderness over the right upper abdominal quadrant.

**LABORATORY DATA.** Blood count hemoglobin, 80 per cent (Sahli); R B C. 4,400,000; W. B. C., 21,000, P 88, L. 10, M 2. Sputum, pneumococcus type II.

Roentgenogram (1/9/38) (Fig. 75) showed a uniform density extending from the diaphragm to the fifth rib in the scapular line on the right side. The heart and aorta were displaced slightly to the left. The left lung was clear. The changes present in the right lung indicated consolidation involving the lower and middle lobes. In addition there was a moderate amount of free fluid in the right pleural cavity.

**COURSE.** These findings on admission indicated the presence of a type II lobar pneumonia. Wide excursions of the temperature prompted us to aspirate the right chest on the seventh day. Pus was obtained. Consequently, an incision was made under local anesthesia in the posterior axillary line paralleling the ninth rib. The periosteum was stripped, 1 inch of the rib removed, the pleural cavity opened, and a large quantity of pus evacuated. A drainage tube was inserted.

A week later the pulse rate began to rise, and there was noted an increase in the cardiac dullness both to the left and to the right. The heart sounds were distinct, the first sound at the apex was split and a soft systolic murmur was heard in this region. An area of percussion dullness appeared at the left base (Ewart's sign), a slight distention of the jugular veins was noted, and this was followed by an increase in the respiratory rate. A diagnosis of acute pneumococcal pericarditis was made.

A roentgen-ray examination at this time, 1/18/38 (Fig. 75) showed a pneumothorax on the right and a considerable increase in the size of the cardiac silhouette. There were signs of fluid in the pericardial sac.

Paracentesis of the pericardium (page 164) revealed 300 cc. of a turbid fluid, and a laboratory examination of the stained smear showed gram-positive diplococci in pairs.

**Discussion (Dr. James Lehman).\***—In this patient the pneumococcus invaded the pericardium from the empyema cavity. Infectious processes below the diaphragm, such as peritonitis, abscess of the liver or pancreas, ulcer of the stomach and subdiaphragmatic abscesses, rarely extend to the pericardium.

The symptoms that follow the involvement of the pericardium are variable and frequently are obscured by those of the underlying condition. Consequently, unless the complication is suspected and the symptoms searched for, suppurative pericarditis may run its entire course without being recognized.

The distinctive to-and-fro pericardial friction sound that has been

\* Associate in Clinical Surgery, Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania.

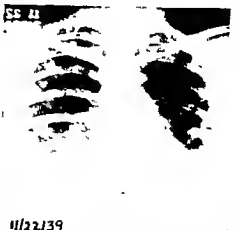


FIG. 75 A. Series of roentgen films taken during course of illness. 1/9/38. Pneumonia with large pleural effusion. 1/18/38. Pneumothorax following aspiration of large amount of fluid. Collapse of the right lung. 2/21/38. Enlargement of the cardiac silhouette. Note the re-expansion of the right lung. 3/21/38. Drainage tube in pericardial sac. 4/20/38. Cardiac shadow decreasing. Patient discharged. 11/22/39. Over a year later. Heart smaller. Physical condition of the patient excellent.

described should always be sought at every examination. I believe it may be heard during the early stages in nearly all cases. When present, it is missed most often because the integrity of the pericardial sac is not suspected; so it should be a clinical rule to make frequent examinations of the precordial area in every case of pneumonia, particularly if empyema has already developed.

You will note from the history that this patient had some reference of pain to the abdomen. At one stage abdominal tenderness was present. Not infrequently, pain referred to abdominal areas from a lower-lobe pneumonia simulates an acute abdominal condition. Sometimes in children a

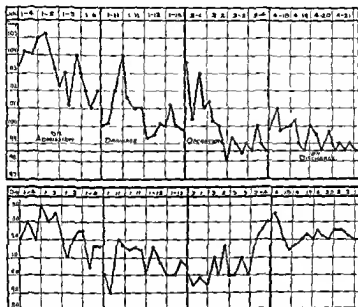


FIG. 75. B. Temperature and pulse record.

pericardial involvement will produce pain in the abdomen that may be diffuse, or it may be localized in the right lower quadrant and simulate acute appendicitis. In many of these children, most often rheumatic in type, pain will also be referred to the neck or to the shoulder. The development of the signs of pericardial involvement often clears the picture, but sometimes the differentiation is not easy.

When pericardial effusion increased in this patient, typical signs developed. Paracentesis of the pericardium revealed the presence of pus and indicated immediate surgical interference. The operation of preference in these patients is resection of the fourth, fifth, and sixth ribs on the left side (Figs. 76A and B). Adequate exposure is necessary. Care should be taken, first, to avoid injury and contamination of the pleura, and second, to provide dependent drainage.

The drain should be placed inside the pericardial sac so that all areas



FIG. 76. Surgical drainage of the pericardial sac. A. Incision. B. Flap turned back and pericardium exposed.

will be drained, particularly the posterior section. If a walled-off abscess is overlooked, a fatality may result. Gentle irrigation is not dangerous if small quantities of warm, sterile, physiologic saline are used; in fact, these may be quite necessary when the pus is thick and plugs of fibrin clog the drainage tube.

If aspiration alone is used and operation delayed, the mortality in acute suppurative pericarditis is 100 per cent. If adequate drainage is established, half of these patients survive. Only 5 per cent of the cases that recover subsequently develop fatal adhesive pericarditis.<sup>339</sup>

Following the adequate drainage of this child's pericardium and the subsequent use of sulfapyridine (see page 198), the temperature gradually returned to normal, and the remainder of her convalescence was uneventful.

A follow-up examination nine months after discharge showed very slight thickening of the pleura at the base of the right chest with obliteration of the right costophrenic sulcus by adhesions (Fig. 76). This portion of the chest, therefore, is almost normal and gives very little evidence of the extensive involvement that was present. The heart is still displaced and slightly enlarged, but its contour is normal. The patient has no complaints, and her exercise tolerance is good.

#### TUBERCULOSIS PERICARDITIS—AUTOPSY

**Case 21.** E. A., a colored male of 31, was admitted to the Philadelphia General Hospital on 4/29/22, complaining of cough, shortness of breath, and swelling of the legs.

**HISTORY.** The patient had attacks of "pneumonia" at the ages of 20, 27, and 30. Following the last attack, he began to notice dyspnea and cough. There was considerable weight loss. Four months before admission swelling of the legs appeared, and this was followed by a considerable increase in the dyspnea. A month before admission, the abdomen began to swell.

**PHYSICAL EXAMINATION** showed B.P. 116/80, dyspnea, cyanosis, and anasarca. The heart rate was 90, the rhythm regular. The heart sounds were weak and distant. No murmurs were heard. There were signs of fluid at both pulmonary bases. A few crackling râles were heard over the left apex anteriorly. Marked ascites was present.

**LABORATORY DATA.** Wassermann negative. Blood count Hemoglobin, 68 per cent (Sahli); R.B.C., 3,200,000, W.B.C., 7,200; differential normal. Urine specific gravity 1.028, light cloud of albumin with a few hyaline casts.

Electrocardiogram inverted T1 and T2.

Chest roentgenogram: Bilateral pleural fluid.

**COURSE.** During the patient's stay in the hospital chest tap was performed 15 times, and a total of 22,500 cc. of pale amber fluid removed. He gradually lost ground and died three months after admission.

**CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS** Pick's disease.

**AUTOPSY.** (Fig. 77.) Heart weight: 1010 Gm. The epicardium was markedly adherent to the pericardium. There was a zone between the pericardium and the epicardium varying in width which contained communicating pockets that were filled with a cheesy material. Here and there was a suggestion of the presence of the same material in the myocardium. The muscle of the right auricular appendage showed definite tuberculous myocarditis. The left lung showed a moderately advanced fibro-ulcerative tuberculosis.

**Discussion.** Tuberculous pericarditis is not a rare condition. Since it occurs in about 5 per cent of autopsies on tuberculous subjects, it may be

considered a disease of decided clinical importance. While the mortality is high, healing may take place in some cases with the subsequent development of chronic constrictive pericarditis.

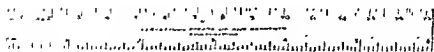


FIG. 77. Tuberculous pericarditis and myocarditis. (Autopsy No. 7,507. Philadelphia General Hospital.)

The pericardium may be invaded from foci in the lungs, peritoneum, pleura or mediastinal nodes. The most common primary focus is the lung. The patient whose history appears above is an example of this type. Very



rarely the pericardium is the only seat of involvement brought to light at autopsy. Many cases thought to be examples of primary tuberculous pericarditis, however, may have an original focus so small that it is easily overlooked. The infection of the pericardium in some cases may be part of a general miliary tuberculosis, in which event it reaches the pericardium by way of the blood stream. In the presence of a miliary tuberculosis, the pericardial involvement is nearly always impossible to demonstrate clinically.

Direct extension from the lungs is probably not as common an occurrence as invasion of the pericardium by way of the lymph channels that drain the mediastinal glands. Symptoms arise during the course of this

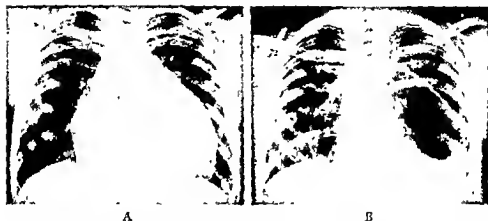


FIG. 78. Tuberculous pericarditis

A. Before paracentesis. The cardiac silhouette is greatly enlarged due to collection of fluid in pericardial sac.

B. Following paracentesis of 900 cc. and air injection. Note small heart and thickened pericardial sac. (Courtesy, X-Ray Department, Philadelphia General Hospital.)

involvement and lead to its detection, for it may be ushered in by a friction rub. In this respect it is not unlike the rheumatic variety. The symptoms of the pulmonary disease may in some cases obscure this early sign; in others, no symptoms of any kind are present. Effusion may attract attention, particularly if it is large, in which event dyspnea enters the picture. The apex beat will no longer be palpable, and the heart sounds will become distant and muffled, and percussion of the chest will reveal a widened area of cardiac dullness. Pulsus paradoxus appears if the effusion is large, and bulging of the neck veins will be evident on inspection. A paracentesis of the pericardium at this stage with the discovery of a hemorrhagic type of fluid arouses considerable suspicion concerning the nature of the process. Success in the demonstration of tubercle bacilli in the effusion, either directly in the stained smear or following guinea pig inoculation, will clinch the diagnosis.

If air is injected into the pericardial sac following paracentesis (Fig. 78), a small heart will usually be revealed, surrounded by a very much thick-

ened pericardium. This appearance is characteristic of the lesion and is second in importance only to the finding of the tubercle bacillus.

Since no invasion of the endocardium occurs in tuberculous pericarditis, no murmurs are usually heard. This may aid many times in differentiating tuberculous from rheumatic pericarditis, since in the rheumatic state, characteristic murmurs are nearly always present. In acute rheumatism there is a leukocytosis, while in tuberculosis there is usually a normal white blood cell count or even a leukopenia. A higher temperature curve and a tendency to the appearance of congestive failure suggest rheumatic disease.

Although in the early stages it may be difficult to differentiate between

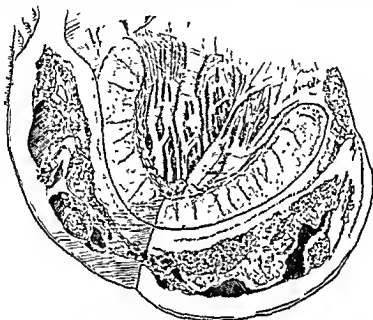


FIG. 79. Tuberculous pericarditis. Note the presence of exudate and adhesions between the thickened layers of pericardium.

the acute rheumatic and the tuberculous forms of pericarditis, subsequent happenings may make the distinction possible. The rheumatic fibrinous exudate may disappear or pass into a chronic type with adhesions. In tuberculosis the pericardium becomes thickened, the effusion becomes less, and masses of organized exudate remain between the layers of pericardium (Fig. 79). Eventually adhesions may contract and this whole area may become obliterated with the development of a chronic fibrous process. In the ashes of the fire no structure sufficiently characteristic to identify the original process as tuberculous may remain. The absence of a rheumatic history or lesion and the presence of a tuberculous focus at another site in the body may be the only evidence that suggests the real nature of the initial process.

In Fig. 77 the tuberculous infiltration of the myocardium served to

establish the identity of the pericardial lesion. The appearance of calcium in the healed pericardium does not establish the process as tuberculous, since this type of infiltration often occurs in the healing of suppurative conditions.

In tuberculosis of the pericardium, larger amounts of fluid are recovered by paracentesis than in any other type. The injection of air into the pericardial sac at the time of the tap was first suggested by Wenckebach in 1910. He replaced the fluid removed with half the volume of air and his patient showed much slower reaccumulation of the effusion. Subsequent reports seemed to confirm this view, and the first series of cases reported in the literature showed great symptomatic relief. It is easier for the heart to work against air than a solid blanket of fluid, and this decrease in resistance may be responsible for the improved state of the circulation. Air, however, will not prevent the formation of adhesions in the sac as claimed by the original investigators in this field.

The general measures used in the treatment of tuberculosis in other locations are also employed in tuberculous pericarditis. Relief of intrapericardial pressure by tapping as often as necessary, absolute bed rest, and a high caloric diet constitute the essential points in the program. Digitalis is rarely indicated since the symptoms of cardiac embarrassment are caused by the tamponade.

If healing is accomplished and the signs of chronic constrictive pericarditis develop, the only satisfactory treatment is surgical (page 184). The best results are obtained in young people who have no evidence of active infection.

## CHRONIC PERICARDITIS

The resolution that follows acute pericarditis pursues a variable course, depending on the type of the initial involvement and to a great extent upon the severity and duration of the process. The clinical detection of chronic pericarditis is difficult, for many times it produces no signs or symptoms and in the majority of the cases its presence does not influence the future health of the patient.

### SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

As healing of the pericardial lesion takes place, it quite often erases all evidence of the nature of the primary process. Consequently, unless the past history of the patient is typical, much confusion is bound to exist at the bedside or at postmortem in regard to etiology. However, evidence of rheumatic infection or tuberculosis elsewhere in the body may be of assistance, while more rarely pneumonia, coronary disease, and malignancy must be considered as possible causes. In the northern states, rheumatic infection is found most often in the past histories of the patients presenting symptoms of chronic pericardial disease.

The isolated patches of fibrous tissue in the pericardium pointed out as "soldiers' spots" by the pathologist deserve only the passing interest that is usually given to them. Even if definite adhesions exist between the layers of the pericardial sac, no disturbance of cardiac function usually appears. In fact, in cases where adhesions are so numerous as to entirely obliterate the space between the two layers of pericardium, the heart may be unaffected if adhesions to neighboring structures are absent.

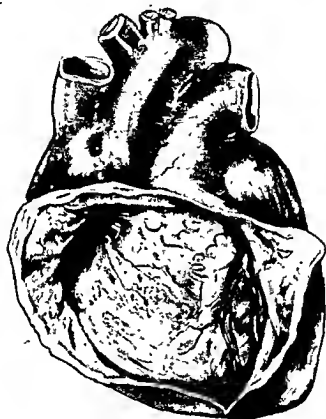


FIG. 80. Chronic calcific pericarditis.

**Constricting Adhesions and Chronic Tamponade.** However, if the healing process produces a thick layer of adhesions that entirely surround the heart, cardiac action may in time be seriously compromised. Contraction of these adhesions, the unyielding character of which meanwhile may be considerably augmented by a widespread calcium (rarely bone) deposition, not only interferes with the diastolic filling of the heart but also blocks venous return by constricting the lumen of the entering veins. This condition is known as chronic constrictive pericarditis and is a feature of Pick's disease (Fig. 80).

Adhesions may likewise develop between the pericardium and its con-

tents and surrounding structures in the chest wall or mediastinum (chronic mediastinopericarditis), causing angulation or rotation of the heart, and in consequence considerable serious interference with its action. Recent views are not entirely in agreement with the old theory that cardiac traction is the cause of the grave sequelae when adhesions develop between the heart and neighboring structures. Symptoms of importance arise only when adhesions either constrict the heart or cause its angulation or rotation by the formation of firm bands between the heart and neighboring structures.

When adhesions constrict the heart and interfere with the venous return, the liver enlarges. Direct involvement of the hepatic vein may contribute to the severity of the process, and ascites appears (Pick's mediastino-pericarditic-pseudocirrhosis). The symptoms of *chronic cardiac tamponade* develop (Fig. 81). It is much easier to remember these signs if the picture of compression of the heart is recalled instead of the old idea that the heart wears itself out to the point of failure by the added work of pulling against the adhesive bands. The triad of Beck, (1) a small quiet heart, (2) a high venous pressure in the arm, and (3) ascites and large liver,<sup>21</sup> presents a brief summary of this condition and should facilitate the recognition of the disease.

It can now be seen that the signs elicited on examination of the patient who has chronic pericarditis depend on the nature and distribution of the adhesive bands. Unless previous rheumatic disease was present, the heart will be normal and no murmurs will be heard. If rheumatic involvement is present, the characteristic murmurs and cardiac enlargement may be detected. Usually the compressed heart of chronic pericarditis is small, and under the fluoroscope its pulsations are not in evidence. If adhesions have securely anchored the heart, no change in position will be seen to follow the respiratory excursions. The same fixation may be demonstrated on physical examination. In some instances where the heart is firmly anchored to the chest wall by adhesions, a systolic retraction of this area, usually in the eleventh posterior interspace, may be seen (Broadbent's sign).

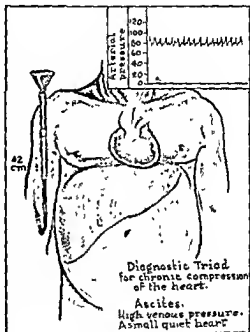


FIG. 81. Chronic cardiac compression. (Redrawn from Beck.)\*

\* Reprinted by permission American Heart Journal.

## TREATMENT

The treatment of chronic pericarditis rests upon a careful estimation of the amount of embarrassment of the circulation that is produced by the adhesions.<sup>28 29</sup> The effect of previous rheumatic disease on the symptoms of congestion must likewise be evaluated. If tuberculosis, subacute bacterial endocarditis or other infections are present, the degree of their activity should be determined, for operation in the presence of any active infection invariably leads to a poor result. If the heart was normal before the adhesions developed, operation may restore complete cardiac function for an indefinite period. The most favorable cases for operation are young individuals presenting the triad of Beck who show no other evidence of heart or vascular disease.

## CHRONIC CARDIAC COMPRESSION

(See page 180)

## ILLUSTRATIVE CASES

CHRONIC CONSTRICTIVE PERICARDITIS<sup>213</sup>

**Case 22.** R. F., a white school boy of 12, was admitted to the Woman's College Hospital on 5/5/36 complaining of swelling of the abdomen.

**HISTORY.** Three years before admission the parents first noticed this swelling, which gradually became worse until weekly tapplings were required. Dyspnea and cyanosis on exertion were noted. Slight edema of the feet was present three weeks before admission. No history of rheumatic infection. A maternal grandfather had tuberculosis.

**PHYSICAL EXAMINATION.** Slightly emaciated boy of 12 years. B.P. 90/60. Dyspnea. Swelling of the veins of the neck. No cardiac enlargement. Fixed apex beat. No systolic retraction. Apical systolic murmur. Lungs showed evidence of fluid at the right base. Marked ascites. The liver was felt 9 cm. below the costal margin after tapping.

**LABORATORY DATA.** Roentgenogram showed heart only slightly enlarged. Lateral view showed a shell of calcium encasing the heart (Fig. 82C).

The electrocardiogram showed on first examination (See Fig. 254A) notched P-waves, diphasic T<sub>2</sub>, and inverted T<sub>3</sub>. Examination two years later showed decreased voltage of the QRS groups and flat T-waves.

**CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS.** A. Etiologic: Unknown. B. Anatomic: Constrictive pericarditis. C. Physiologic: Restricted diastolic filling. N.S.R. D. Functional Classification: Class 4. Therapeutic Classification: Class E.

**Discussion.** This patient when first examined showed ascites and signs of venous obstruction out of proportion to the amount of cardiac damage that could be demonstrated on physical examination. A rheumatic history and signs of organic valvular disease were conspicuously absent. The heart was small and the lateral roentgen study (Fig. 82) showed a shell of calcium surrounding the heart. A comparison of the electrocardiograms (Fig. 254) revealed a decreasing amplitude of the QRS complexes and T-waves that is so characteristic in these cases.

Further studies showed a diminished cardiac output per beat and per minute and a decrease in the velocity of the blood flow. The small heart.



FIG. 82. A. Swollen jugular veins.  
B. Ascites.  
C. Roentgen film (lateral view). Note layer of calcium encasing the heart.

the decreased amplitude of the contraction evident on fluoroscopy, and the shell of calcium in the roentgen film suggested that the cardiac symptoms in this child were due to decreased diastolic filling.

In view of this explanation for the symptoms, it was obvious that digitalis could contribute nothing to the plan of therapy. Furthermore, symptomatic medical treatment carelessly carried out in these cases may actually be harmful. For example, venesection performed for the cyanosis and bulging jugulars evident on slight exertion would dangerously lower the venous pressure to the point where it might be insufficient to accomplish auricular filling.

The treatment indicated is pericardectomy. The result will depend upon intelligent pre-operative treatment and the experience of the surgeon. The pre-operative regime consists of limiting the fluid intake to 1200 cc. daily and the sodium chloride content of the diet to 2.0 Gm. daily. The protein intake should be increased owing to the low serum protein that is generally encountered. Mercurial diuretics are useful in the dehydration program that precedes operation. Mercupurin is usually given in 2 cc. amounts intravenously every three days with ammonium chloride in 1.0 Gm. (15 grains) doses by mouth after meals. Theobromine sodium acetate in 0.3 Gm. (5 grains) doses after meals may be helpful between injections of the mercupurin.

Thoracentesis (page 94) and abdominal tapping (page 96) were both indicated prior to operation in this patient. Following the pericardectomy the diuretic drugs are continued until a complete cardiac balance is restored. An intravenous injection of 2 cc. of mercupurin every week for some months can be used to advantage and is not harmful.

The operation of pericardectomy is usually carried out under ether anesthesia. The second, third, fourth and fifth costal cartilages are resected on the left side. The periosteum is left in place, and this permits regeneration of the bony framework of the ribs following operation. As much of the pericardium as possible is excised over both ventricles and the heart released from its constricting shell. Relief is prompt, striking and generally permanent.



## ACUTE AND SUBACUTE BACTERIAL ENDOCARDITIS

Because all the sick do not recover does not prove that there is no art of medicine.—CICERO, *De Natura Deorum*, Bk. ii., Ch. 4, 12.

Bacterial endocarditis remains one of the saddest chapters in clinical medicine. Whether it appears on the scene as a complication of an acute infectious process or whether it pursues a more insidious course after implantation upon a previously damaged heart valve, the end result is the same. In the first instance, the disease is a rapidly fatal one; in the second, the duration of life may be a year, rarely longer, allowing the physician ample time to display his therapeutic skill. Although the progress in treatment as far as final results are concerned has been slight, with the continued improvement in our methods of attack, the physician of tomorrow may witness the victory.

### ACUTE BACTERIAL ENDOCARDITIS

Acute bacterial endocarditis is still referred to as malignant or ulcerative endocarditis. The term ulcerative refers only to the pathologic change seen in the valves and gives no idea as to the nature of the etiologic agent. Consequently the disease should be referred to as acute bacterial (pneumococcic, streptococcic, etc.) endocarditis, using in the diagnosis, whenever possible, the name of the organism responsible for the lesion. Acute endocardial lesions of a rheumatic nature are not included in this group.

#### ETIOLOGY

The organisms most commonly associated with acute bacterial endocarditis are *Streptococcus hemolyticus* (55 per cent), *Pneumococcus* (13 per cent), *Staphylococcus aureus* (12 per cent), *Gonococcus* (11 per cent), while miscellaneous invaders like the *Meningococcus* and the colon, anthrax, plague, and pyocyaneus bacilli make up the remaining small percentage (Thayer). When these organisms are the active agents in the heart infection, the clinical course covers but a few weeks. If the duration of life is two months or over, the condition is more apt to be due to *Streptococcus viridans* and is referred to as subacute bacterial endocarditis.

#### PATHOLOGY

Most of the bacteria that cause this fulminating type of infection are cocci. They attack the heart by way of the blood stream to which they

gain entrance from a number of locations. Common avenues of invasion include the uterine wall during the early puerperium, the pneumonic lung, wounds, gonorrheal joints, the meninges, osteomyelitis, boils, and the infected pockets that remain following dental extractions. Generally the organism gains easier foothold in previously damaged hearts, lodging in most cases on the valvular structures although the endocardium is by no means immune to attack. The vegetations that are products of bacterial growth may appear on the inner wall of the auricle or ventricle and along the intima of the aorta or a patent ductus arteriosus. Their rapid growth gives rise to the appearance of ulceration, and the heart valves or aorta may be so extensively invaded and weakened that aneurysmal pouchings (mycotic aneurysms) may soon appear. Consequently rupture of these valve leaflets is not unusual.

### SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

**Vegetations.** The persistence of the high fever of the original infection often tends to conceal the attack on the cardiac structures. Blood cultures



FIG. 83 Subacute bacterial endocarditis. Petechiae on abdomen.

taken during the acute illness may have already detected and identified the invader, in which event the question of cardiac involvement is often a matter of debate. However, if the patient lives and the endocardial vegetations increase in size, two happenings call the clinician's attention to the heart. First, the growth of the vegetations on the aortic or mitral valve may change the character or pitch of a murmur previously noted. If murmurs were absent, one or more may now appear. If these changes in the physical signs appear suddenly, ulcerative processes should be suspected. However, the character or intensity of the murmur should never be regarded as an index of the severity of the process.

**Embolism.** The second happening is a more serious one. Large (and usually infected) particles of the vegetations may break off, form emboli, and lodge in some distant organ (kidney, spleen, brain) with the production of metastatic abscesses. Petechial hemorrhages into the skin may appear at this stage and may be regarded as manifestations of the same embolic process (Fig. 83). In some cases none of these signs may appear, in which event the cardiac complications are revealed only at autopsy.

Laboratory findings, aside from the positive blood culture, give little

aid in detecting cardiac infection. The leukocyte count is high, and the urine may show a moderate amount of albumin and a few red blood cells to suggest a focal embolic lesion. The electrocardiogram is negative unless the conduction system is directly invaded by extension from the endocardium, which rarely, if ever, occurs.

### PROGNOSIS

In acute bacterial endocarditis, embolism is usually the cause of death in a few days or weeks. In other cases, an overwhelming toxemia may hasten death before the inroads of the cardiac infection have been extensive. Less often congestive failure appears as the terminal episode. Fatal hemorrhages into the skin and mucous membranes or from the nose or gastro-intestinal tract may take place in some cases. Recovery from this disease is most unusual, but if it occurs, chronic valvular disease will be the sequel.

### ILLUSTRATIVE CASE

#### ACUTE BACTERIAL (GONOCOCCAL) ENDOCARDITIS COMPLICATING PUERPERIUM —AUTOPSY

**CASE 23.** W. B., a colored female of 18, was admitted to the Philadelphia General Hospital on 4/8/36 complaining of fever and pain in the left elbow of a week's duration. She was pregnant at term.

**PHYSICAL EXAMINATION.** B.P. 150/100. T. 101° F. P. 120. The rhythm was regular. The apex beat was in the fifth interspace in the midclavicular line. There was a soft systolic murmur in the region of the cardiac apex.

**LABORATORY DATA.** Wassermann negative. The urine showed a cloud of albumin and casts. Blood count: hemoglobin, 71 per cent (Sahli); R.B.C., 4,300,000, W.B.C., 19,000, P. 76, L. 24.

**COURSE.** On 4/14/36 the patient was delivered spontaneously. On 4/19/36 the blood culture was positive for gonococcus. The septic temperature continued. Death occurred on 4/24/36.

**AUTOPSY.** The heart weighed 350 Gm. The septal leaflet of the aortic valve was ulcerated and necrotic and replaced by a soft mass of grayish-red friable vegetations (Fig. 84). The remaining leaflets were normal. Along the line of closure of the mitral valve and on the auricular surface there was a single row of fresh vegetations which were easily broken off. There was an ulceration on the mitral leaflet, the size of a match head, but no evidence of rheumatic valvulitis was present. The tricuspid and pulmonic valves were normal.

**Discussion.** Considering the prevalence of gonorrhea, gonococcal endocarditis is a rare complication. In a recent publication Freund and his co-workers were able to collect only 139 cases from the literature.<sup>109</sup> Males predominated in their series, and the age of the patients ranged from two to 51 years. The average duration of the disease they found to be about ten weeks and the mortality 93.5 per cent.

The diagnosis in this patient was established by blood culture and confirmed when the gonococcus was again recovered from the valve lesions at necropsy.

There is at present no general agreement in regard to the plan of treatment that should be adopted in these cases. In the few instances of recov-

ery from the disease that are on record, repeated transfusions, vaccines made up of killed gonococci, antigenococcus serum, and the intravenous administration of dyes constitute the measures employed. However, we can



FIG. 84. Acute bacterial (gonococcal) endocarditis of the aortic valve. (Autopsy No. 31,364. Philadelphia General Hospital.)

safely say that all these therapeutic weapons have been used in many patients who did not recover.

In the treatment of gonococcal arthritis and other systemic manifestations of the disease, vaccines have enjoyed considerable reputation, and acute reactions with temperature are essential to success. Experimentally, it has also been shown that nearly all the gonococci in cultures are killed

when exposed to a temperature of 106° F. for four or five hours. These facts form the basis of treatment by hyperthermia.

Favorable reports have appeared recently in the literature where this type of therapy has been successful in gonococcal endocarditis and septicemia. Williams,<sup>401, 402</sup> using the Kettering hypertherm, reports one case where fever treatment resulted in sterilization of the blood. Healing lesions were found at autopsy, and death was due to uremia and coexisting syphilis of the liver. In another case reported as gonococcal endocarditis, with gonococcal arthritis, fever treatment resulted in prompt recovery. Freund and his co-workers report a cure in a negress of 20 following the use of fever therapy and recommend 106.7° to 107° F. as the optimum temperature for gonococcal endocarditis. However, Hoyt and Warren<sup>184</sup> report a case treated for 17½ hours at 106° F. where the result was fatal. Krusen and Elkins<sup>196</sup> have also reported a case of gonococcemia with endocarditis treated by fever therapy without favorable effect.

The possibility of a radical cure of the invasion by extirpation of the focus through which entry is gained into the blood stream is suggested by Wheeler and Connell, who recommend hysterectomy.

Today attention centers chiefly on sulfanilamide and its derivatives in the treatment of this disease. Much has been written concerning the usefulness of these new drugs in gonococcal infections, but opinion has not crystallized in regard to many essential points in therapy. Long and Bliss,<sup>230</sup> during the past few years, have used sulfanilamide in two patients suffering from gonococcal endocarditis and bacteremia. In both instances intensive therapy using doses suggested in Table V brought the endocarditis and bacteremia under control. Both patients developed signs of acute nephritis during the course of their infection, and in one death occurred from this complication. One cure is reported following the use of sulfanilamide. Long and Bliss point out the necessity of prolonged therapy if recurrences are to be avoided.

At the present time the number of cases has been too small to permit a definite opinion as to the exact status of sulfanilamide therapy in acute bacterial endocarditis. Other measures, including frequent transfusions, vaccines, dyes, and sera have been so uniformly unsuccessful that the hope of the future hinges largely on the success of the sulfanilamide group used either alone or in combination with pyrexial therapy.

## SUBACUTE BACTERIAL ENDOCARDITIS

### ETIOLOGY

Subacute bacterial endocarditis is caused by organisms that show a less fulminating course after a foothold has been gained on a damaged valve leaflet but reveal an ultimate mortality that is comparable to the acute form. Nonhemolytic *Streptococcus viridans* is the invader in the majority (90 per cent) of the cases. The influenza bacillus, the *Enterococcus*, the *Meningococcus*, and organisms of the *Brucella* group make up the remaining

percentage. Very rarely higher bacteria (*Leptothrix* and *Actinomyces bovis*) invade the endocardial structures and produce a similar clinical picture.

Subacute bacterial endocarditis occurs in about 1 to 2 per cent of all cardiac cases and in one out of every 25 to 50 cases of rheumatic heart disease. Any vascularized scar in the endocardium appears to invite implantation of the *Streptococcus viridans*. Consequently all congenital defects, as well as arteriosclerotic and syphilitic valvular lesions, form potential sites. Studies on a large series of cases<sup>29, 269, 243</sup> have shown that the *Streptococcus viridans* usually gains access to the blood stream from foci of infection in the upper respiratory tract and mouth. Chronic otitic infections, genito-urinary tract foci, and open wounds should also be regarded as possible portals of entry. The gastro-intestinal tract plays a minor role in spite of the many reports emphasizing the possibility of stasis with subsequent invasion from this area.

It is not unusual to see cases of quiescent and well-healed rheumatic endocarditis start their downhill course following an ill-advised tonsillectomy or dental extraction. Following these procedures the large areas in the mouth and throat covered by layers of necrotic tissue give ample opportunity to the ever-present *Streptococcus viridans* to gain an easy entrance.

### PATHOLOGY

When infection occurs, the mitral valve is involved in the majority of instances, but the aortic valve, particularly if it is of the bicuspid type, is not infrequently attacked (see Fig. 126). The vegetations may also spread along the walls of the heart chamber, invade the aorta, and block the coronaries. The *S. viridans* also shows a great affinity for congenital defects of all kinds.

When implantation occurs on a valve, the inflammatory growth is again capable of extension into the valve with subsequent weakening of its structure and the formation of valvular aneurysms. Vegetations break off and form emboli with the production of further complications in distant regions.

### SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

The symptoms of subacute bacterial endocarditis are much less severe than those of the acute variety that have just been described. The onset of subacute bacterial endocarditis is usually slow and so insidious that the patient when seen is not able to give the exact date of the origin of his complaints. At first a low-grade fever with weakness, loss of weight, anorexia, and joint and back pain is present. Members of the patient's family or his business associates may notice the pallor and weight loss and suggest medical attention. Tuberculosis, malaria, and other infections are apt to be suspected until a detailed study including a blood culture reveals the diagnosis. Often an embolic episode may first cause the patient

to seek medical advice, particularly if the embolus lodges in the region of the retinal artery or in an abdominal organ. By the time that attention is directed to the source of trouble, a palpable spleen, clubbing of the fingers, and marked anemia, and all the signs that are so characteristic of the disease are usually present.

**Murmurs.** If no murmurs are audible, care should be used in making the diagnosis. If a murmur is already present following an old attack of rheumatic fever, its features should be recorded and closely watched. If the murmur changes in pitch or intensity during an interval between visits, this may be considered as valuable evidence. Crops of petechiae should be searched for each day (Fig. 84). Tender fingers and toes as well as clubbing are other valuable aids in establishing the diagnosis.

**Emboli.** Repeated insults of an embolic nature may so decrease kidney function in patients with subacute bacterial endocarditis that uremic symptoms soon appear (Fig. 85). Albuminuria and hematuria will appear before this terminal stage is reached and furnish a clue to the presence of renal disease.

**Heart failure** occurs more frequently in subacute bacterial endocarditis than is commonly believed, a fact that has been brought out in a study by Buchbinder and Saphir.<sup>42</sup> These observers likewise have shown that the heart in this disease is the seat of widespread anatomic changes, consisting of minute emboli, infarcts, and abscesses, and diffuse areas of inflammation with perivascular fibrosis. These widespread changes are important to keep in mind when we formulate any plan of therapy.

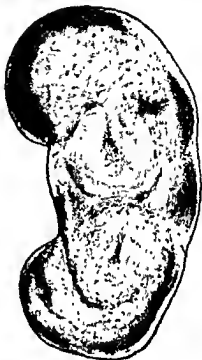


FIG. 85. The kidney in subacute bacterial endocarditis. Note the numerous petechiae and the scarring caused by multiple infarcts. ("Flea-bitten kidney.")

### PROGNOSIS

If the opinions of all physicians who have treated subacute bacterial endocarditis were gathered, a uniform hopelessness as to the outcome would be seen to prevail. Once the diagnosis is firmly established, I have never seen recovery take place. Libman<sup>230, 231</sup> reports at least 3 per cent of recoveries in the usual type of the disease and believes that there is a possibility that more recoveries in mild cases occur but are overlooked. These mild cases, however, are difficult to recognize. Bacteria in the blood

stream may be few in number or absent altogether owing to their prompt destruction by the body forces of resistance as soon as they are swept from the vegetations. If we view the matter from the angle of the postmortem examination, evidence seems to be in favor of healing, since the pathologist routinely encounters fibrosis and calcification in the structures that are involved in this disease.

### MANAGEMENT

The management of these hopeless cases of subacute bacterial endocarditis is generally viewed by the practitioner as an ordeal that must be faced. No other situation in medical practice surpasses it in testing the caliber of the physician. These patients and their worried families require time, thought, tact, and resourcefulness, many times insisting on a trial of various remedies both old and new. Continued failure often undermines confidence, and the physician becomes wearied and discouraged when he should remain watchful and hopeful. At least we can keep hoping, meanwhile guarding our patients against unnecessary and at times actually harmful measures. A regime of therapy should be chosen that will encourage and aid the forces of Nature. My therapeutic attempts and their uniformly poor results are reflected in the following case histories.

### ILLUSTRATIVE CASES

(SHOWING: HYPERPYREXIAL THERAPY, TRANSFUSION, SULFANILAMIDE, SULFAPYRIDINE, HEPARIN-SULFAPYRIDINE THERAPY, AND ARTERIOVENOUS ANEURYSM EXCISION)

#### RHEUMATIC HEART DISEASE—SUBACUTE BACTERIAL ENDOCARDITIS

**Case 24.** Mrs. T. F., an American housewife of 30, was first seen on September 3, 1936. There were no cardiovascular symptoms. She was pregnant at the third month and her physician requested evaluation of a systolic apical murmur discovered on routine physical examination.

The patient had one attack of rheumatic fever at the age of 12.

**PHYSICAL EXAMINATION.** B.P. 105/80. Pulse 80. No irregularity. A rough systolic murmur was heard over the apex transmitted well into the axilla. The pulmonic second sound was accentuated. Slight cardiac enlargement was present. The electrocardiogram was normal.

**CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS.** A. Etiologic: Rheumatic. Inactive. B. Anatomic: Slight cardiac enlargement. Mitral insufficiency. C. Physiologic: Normal sinus rhythm. D. Functional Classification: Class 1. Therapeutic Classification: Class B.

The opinion was given that the pregnancy would not be complicated by any cardiac symptoms. Routine examinations were advised (Chapter 15).

This patient was next seen on 9/16/38. Her pregnancy had been uneventful. She was well until a month before the examination when she developed headaches, weakness, and slight dyspnea.

**PHYSICAL EXAMINATION.** Cardiac status unchanged. The spleen was not palpable. The blood count: hemoglobin, 90 per cent (Sahli); R.B.C., 4,800,000; W.B.C., 11,200. Blood culture, negative.

When re-examined one month later, 10/16/38, the patient had lost eight pounds in weight. Her complaints were weakness, palpitation, and dyspnea. The temperature was 99.3° F. She was admitted to the hospital for study. A week later the blood culture was positive for *Streptococcus viridans*.



**Discussion.** When the cause of this patient's symptoms was revealed by the positive blood culture, she was ambulatory, slightly overweight, and appeared to be in good health. The amount of cardiac damage resulting from one attack of rheumatic fever in childhood was slight and well healed. She came through one pregnancy without complications, was able to manage her household efficiently, and took part in numerous outside activities.

The development of subacute bacterial endocarditis in a young person of this type whose heart damage has been trivial and certainly compatible with a reasonable life expectancy is tragic and calls for heroic measures. To give a hopeless prognosis on the basis of the blood culture to families of these patients is not an easy task, particularly when the victims' glow of health at the time is but slightly dimmed. Newspaper and radio health talks that also bring to the fireside the news of wonderful advances in medical science have little to say regarding this disease. However, other well-advertised scientific discoveries naturally lead relatives to expect that "*surely something can be done.*"

Consequently, when the *S. viridans* was cultivated from the blood of this patient, vaccines from the organism were prepared and injected into suitable donors in ascending doses in an attempt to procure immune blood. Three robust donors were inoculated over the course of three weeks. At the end of this period of preparation, the blood serum of each agglutinated the *S. viridans* in high titer. During the patient's first month in the hospital ordinary transfusions of 500 cc. of whole blood had been given every week. There were no reactions, and the blood count was kept at 5,000,000. During the fifth week transfusions from the immune donors were begun. When 100 cc. of the first transfusion had been injected, so severe a reaction developed that the transfusion had to be discontinued. Five days later only 50 cc. of the blood drawn from the second donor were given before a similar marked reaction took place. The patient refused to take the next transfusion, and the third donor was not used.

The failure of this therapeutic procedure was discouraging, and the severity of the reactions experienced by this patient makes me hesitate to recommend it. In addition the method is time-consuming and expensive, and usually it is difficult to get professional donors to submit to injections of vaccine.

Recently, Kilgore<sup>189</sup> recorded three similar failures in cases where the amount of immune blood given exceeded that in any of the previously reported cases, while Howell, Portes, and Beverley are more hopeful.<sup>190</sup> Nevertheless, their patient died a week after the last transfusion. The improvement was temporary following each injection of the immune blood and may have been due to increase in the blood count or the agglutinins for the infecting organisms. The possibility also exists that the effect was purely psychic.

In addition to injections of immune blood, Lamb gave serum from an immunized horse and reports an unfavorable result.<sup>200</sup> Other accounts in

literature dealing with immune hemotherapy in subacute bacterial endocarditis are not enthusiastic.<sup>103, 199</sup>

The use of the immune donor, however, appeals to the representatives of the family. They view the doctor as a modern Galahad fighting the microbe with strange and intricate weapons, and as a result they have much to tell abroad. The morale of everyone connected with the case enjoys a temporary elevation, which is reflected at once in the patient's attitude. This is my impression of the value of immune hemotherapy.

During the second month of this patient's stay in the hospital, the steady downward course was evident. Transfusions of whole blood were used frequently, but in spite of them the blood count fell to 54 per cent hemoglobin, 2,300,000 red blood cells by the end of the eighth week. Occasional embolic phenomena were now in evidence in the extremities (tender nodes), the kidneys (hematuria, backache), and the spleen (tenderness, enlargement). Weight was lost rapidly, and the degree of toxemia increased.

Toward the middle of the third month a greater degree of cardiac enlargement was noted, the liver became enlarged and tender, and edema of the feet, dyspnea and slight cyanosis appeared. While these signs of heart failure are unusual in the cases of subacute bacterial endocarditis, they may be explained by the fact that the patient escaped major embolic accidents as the months went by. In this event it is only natural to suppose that the myocardium would become the seat of sufficient structural damage to account for its failure.<sup>42</sup> Therefore, it is evident that we need no longer make use of that indefinite term, toxemia, to explain the myocardial weakness and failure that develop in the course of subacute bacterial endocarditis. Sudden rupture of a valve, the seat of a mycotic aneurysm may add an additional load that precipitates failure in some instances.

In the presence of fever and such extensive myocardial injury, it is little wonder that no response was obtained when the patient was digitalized. Vitamin B<sub>1</sub> (thiamin chloride) and C (cevitamic acid) were given in large amounts by mouth and parenterally when edema appeared, with no obvious result. An increasing stupor was soon replaced by coma, and the patient died at the beginning of the thirteenth week.

A postmortem examination was not obtained in this case, nor was it requested. There are times when the physician finds it impossible to go to willing, co-operative families with a last request of this nature, particularly if he knows from the close contact of weeks that this debt to science, if paid, will immeasurably increase the burden of grief.

#### SUBACUTE BACTERIAL ENDOCARDITIS—INSIDIOUS ONSET AND LONG DURATION —AUTOPSY

**CASE 25.** W. W., a white male physician of 34, was admitted to the Philadelphia General Hospital on 11/17/31 complaining of fever and loss of weight.

**HISTORY.** Over a year before admission, the patient was awakened by a sudden, severe backache radiating toward the left sacro-iliac joint. The pain was partially relieved by aspirin, and he was able to attend to all the duties of his practice. At the end of a week he consulted an orthopedic specialist who, following a roentgen ray examination, made

a diagnosis of osteo-arthritis of the sacro-iliac joints. A belt was prescribed which gave the patient some relief although the backache continued to be troublesome.

Headaches were then present every day, and slight pallor was noticed by members of the family. Consequently the doctor visited another colleague and had his glasses changed. He also stopped by the hospital and had a blood count. A moderate secondary anemia was found. A vacation away from home was the prescription; anemia and overwork the diagnosis.

A month at the seashore was of little value. On his return to the city, a loss of five pounds in weight was noted. There was a slight cough and an evening temperature as high as 100° F. A chest specialist was consulted who found evidences of tuberculous infiltration at both apices, and sent the patient home to bed. Inquiry revealed that two brothers and one sister had died of tuberculosis.

During the next four months at home, little improvement was observed. The temperature continued, the anemia increased, and the patient lost 26 pounds in weight.

When admitted to the hospital, the physical examination revealed pallor, a temperature of 100° F., a pulse of 80, and the blood pressure measured 96/84. There was dulness on percussion over both apices. No râles were elicited. The apex beat was in the sixth interspace just outside the midclavicular line, and there was a harsh apical systolic murmur transmitted into the left axilla. The fingers were clubbed.

LABORATORY DATA. Blood count hemoglobin, 60 per cent (Sahli); R.B.C., 3,000,000, W.B.C., 17,000. Wassermann reaction negative. Six sputum examinations were negative.

At the end of the first week, the blood culture was reported positive for *S. viridans*. The same day petechiae appeared in the conjunctivae, and the spleen was palpable for the first time.

CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS A. Etiologic: Subacute bacterial endocarditis *S. viridans*. B. Anatomic: Slight cardiac enlargement. Mitral regurgitation C. Physiologic: Normal sinus rhythm. D. Functional Classification: Class 1. Therapeutic Classification: Class E.

The course was slowly downhill, and the patient died 12/14/31, 15 months after the onset of symptoms.

AUTOPSY. The heart weighed 300 Gm. The pulmonic valve was normal. The tricuspid valve showed a few vegetations about 1 to 2 mm. in diameter. The left side of the heart (Fig. 86) revealed extensive growth of vegetations on the free border of the mitral valve, extending down on the chordae tendinae and on the left auricular wall. The aortic valve was normal. Both lungs revealed healed apical lesions of tuberculosis. The spleen and kidneys showed multiple areas of infarction.

Discussion. The history of the onset of this patient's illness is typical of the disease. Often vague joint pains and headaches occur as prodromal symptoms. Fever may develop during the early stages and disappear for long intervals, but it always recurs and once established, seldom leaves the picture completely for any length of time.

This patient's story brings out the danger of viewing pain in a location that happens to be the official precinct of a specialist, as a result of a disease process at this site. There is no doubt that a mild degree of osteo-arthritis was present in the region indicated, but the local findings in this case did not explain the whole picture. The same observation holds true with regard to the headache. The patient was a physician, and for this reason his fellow practitioners took too much for granted when he consulted them in regard to a symptom. It was quite natural, when the history of tuberculosis in the family was revealed, and the roentgen study showed bilateral apical shadows, that the expert on chest should feel that the patient's case was fully solved and advise him accordingly. We are all apt to develop "blind spots" for certain unexplained symptoms when we are either too tired or too hasty. Unfortunately, at a later date we may see



FIG. 86. Subacute bacterial endocarditis. Note the extensive growth of vegetations on the free border of the mitral valve, the chordae tendineae and on the wall of the left auricle, (Autopsy No. 23,563, Philadelphia General Hospital.)

these symptoms develop to embarrassing proportions. The flower in full bloom may be readily named by a colleague when its species is difficult to recognize in the bud.

When this patient was viewed as a whole, the parts of the puzzle went into place very readily. The embolic manifestations were recognized and the positive blood culture clinched the diagnosis. The autopsy showed an extensive growth of vegetations, not only on the heart valve but also on the auricular wall. The apical lesions of tuberculosis were found, but they were completely healed. The areas of infarction in the kidneys suggested another cause for the backache that ushered in the illness.

#### SUBACUTE BACTERIAL ENDOCARDITIS ACCOMPANIED BY MULTIPLE EMBOLIC EPISODES—AUTOPSY

**Case 26.** R. F. K., a male clerk of 31, was admitted to a surgical service at the Woman's College Hospital on January 2, 1935, complaining of sudden pain in the abdomen.

**HISTORY.** For two months following a dental extraction the patient had complained of weakness, vertigo, and headache, and was unable to work for the week before admission, because of increase in the severity of the symptoms. The past history showed attacks of rheumatic fever at the ages of 11 and 13.

**PHYSICAL EXAMINATION.** T. 101° F. P. 110, BP. 150/40. Pallor. Corrigan pulse. There was cardiac enlargement to the anterior axillary line. The heart rhythm was regular. There was an accentuation of the first heart sound at the apex, and in the same area a diastolic thrill was palpable. Presystolic and diastolic murmurs were heard in the mitral area. Along the left sternal border there was a loud diastolic murmur. The spleen was palpable and tender. The fingers showed marked clubbing.

**LABORATORY DATA.** Blood cultures: 125 colonies of *Streptococcus viridans* per cc of blood. Wassermann reaction negative. Blood count: hemoglobin 55 per cent (Sahli), R.B.C., 3,200,000, W.B.C. 14,000. The urine showed 10 R.B.C per HPF.

**CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS.** A. Etiologic: Rheumatic. Subacute bacterial endocarditis. *S. viridans*. B. Anatomic: Aortic insufficiency. Mitral stenosis. Mitral insufficiency. C. Physiologic: Normal sinus rhythm. D. Functional Classification. Class 3. Therapeutic Classification: Class E.

**Discussion.** Needless to say, this patient did not require surgical treatment. Viewing the history subsequent to the extraction of three teeth, we cannot state that the development of subacute bacterial endocarditis was merely a coincidence. I have many times seen the *S. viridans* gain a foothold in a previously damaged endocardium following an ill-advised tonsillectomy or dental extraction. This patient had three teeth removed because of abscesses that were demonstrated on roentgen examination. He was advised to have this done because of "heart trouble." A local anesthetic was injected, which may have forced infected material lurking about the margins and roots of the teeth deep into the capillaries and given it a good start on its way to the heart valves.

In all patients who have damaged hearts, particularly the younger ones where rheumatic and congenital types predominate, dental extractions should not be freely advised or carelessly undertaken. A complete physical examination should first be carried out. Anemia and dietary deficiencies brought to light should first be explained and then corrected by iron,

vitamins, and a proper diet. This may help to increase those forces of resistance that we so often refer to in our daily practice.

When the patient is ready to have the dental operation, the surgeon should first give the teeth a thorough cleansing to remove the contaminants from the field. Extractions should then be carried out at sensible intervals. After each extraction a thorough cleaning of the socket is advisable, and packing should be avoided if possible. All patients known to have heart lesions should be referred first to their physician by the dentist before any operative work is begun, in order that responsibility may be shared and all the protective measures employed.

It seems likely that *S. viridans* invades the blood stream of normal individuals many times during a lifetime. This fact may often be demonstrated by the use of special technic.<sup>208, 211</sup> I am not convinced that the endothelial structures are more permeable in late winter and spring and less permeable in summer and autumn and that we should confine our operations to these favorable seasons. When we advise operations on teeth and tonsils at any season in patients known to have heart disease, the use of sulfanilamide or one of its derivatives before and after the operation is worthy of trial to combat the transient bacteremia that often occurs.

TABLE V\*  
SULFANILAMIDE DOSAGE

The Amounts of Sulfanilamide Necessary to Establish Effective Blood Levels (10 to 15 Milligrams Per Cent) Quickly in Patients Ill with Severe Hemolytic Streptococcal, Meningococcal, Gonococcal, Pneumococcal or Welch Bacillary Infections

| WEIGHT OF PATIENT |        | INITIAL DOSE<br>Per Os |        | MAINTENANCE<br>DOSE Per Os q.<br>4 HOURS (DAY<br>AND NIGHT) |        | TOTAL DOSE<br>FIRST 24 HOURS |                        | TOTAL DAILY<br>DOSE BICARBON-<br>ATE OF SODA |        |
|-------------------|--------|------------------------|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------|--------|------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------------------------|--------|
| KILOS             | POUNDS | GRAMS                  | GRAINS | GRAMS                                                       | GRAINS | GRAMS<br>PER<br>KILO         | GRAINS<br>PER<br>POUND | GRAMS                                        | GRAINS |
| 70                | 150    | 4.8                    | 80     | 1.2                                                         | 20     | 0.15                         | 1.2                    | 3.6                                          | 60     |
| 60                | 125    | 4.2                    | 70     | 0.9                                                         | 15     | 0.15                         | 1.2                    | 3.0                                          | 50     |
| 45                | 100    | 3.6                    | 60     | 0.9                                                         | 15     | 0.18                         | 1.3                    | 3.0                                          | 50     |
| 35                | 75     | 3.6                    | 60     | 0.9                                                         | 15     | 0.23                         | 1.8                    | 3.0                                          | 50     |
| 23                | 50     | 3.0                    | 50     | 0.6                                                         | 10     | 0.26                         | 2.0                    | 1.8                                          | 30     |
| 11                | 25     | 1.8                    | 30     | 0.3                                                         | 5      | 0.30                         | 2.2                    | 0.9                                          | 15     |

\* From Long and Bliss, "Clinical Use of Sulfanilamide and Sulfapyridine and Allied Compounds."—Reprinted by permission Macmillan Co., N. Y.

When subacute bacterial endocarditis develops, however, the use of sulfanilamide derivatives alone have no effect on the course of the disease. This patient was the first under my continuous care where sulfanilamide was used in an attempt to rout the invasion of the *S. viridans*. Very slightly lower doses were given than have since been recommended by Long and Bliss<sup>236</sup> in Table V. An initial dose of 4.0 Gm. (60 grains) of sulfanilamide was administered and this was followed by 1.0 Gm. (15 grains) doses

every four hours accompanied by a similar amount of sodium bicarbonate. No untoward effect was noticed. During this week, there were many variations in the temperature, but it is impossible to state whether they were due to the drug, since similar remissions occurred in the absence of sulfanilamide. Blood cultures were negative during the period in which sulfanilamide was given, but were positive again when the drug was discontinued, demonstrating the failure of the chemical to penetrate the depth of the lesions on the heart valves.

There are comparatively few reports in literature of large series of cases of subacute bacterial endocarditis treated with sulfanilamide. Isolated instances of recovery have been reported by Hussey,<sup>180</sup> Major and Leger.<sup>254</sup> One patient reported by the last observer was cured by combined sulfanilamide and neoprontosil therapy, but died of congestive failure 29 days later. Autopsy showed damage of the aortic and mitral valves, but cultures of removed segments were sterile. While the diagnosis in other reported cases of cure may be open to doubt, the patient reported by Major and Leger had a history of rheumatic fever and old mitral and aortic valvular lesions, petechiae, splinter hemorrhages, tender fingers, fever, enlargement of the spleen, and three blood cultures positive for *S. viridans*. Necropsy showed the evidence of a recent endocarditis in the stage of healing and repair. The question, of course, arises whether or not cure was produced in this single instance by the use of the drug, or whether it was another example of spontaneous recovery. We can be hopeful that it was an example of the efficacy of the early use of sulfanilamide before the bacteria in the valve lesions became inaccessible, since the time of the institution of sulfanilamide therapy in these cases appears to be a most important factor.

Spink and Crago,<sup>330</sup> in a detailed evaluation of sulfanilamide therapy in 12 cases of subacute bacterial endocarditis, report a bactericidal effect that was temporary and depended on continued use of the drug in 10 of the 12 instances. They conclude that the value of sulfanilamide is doubtful. Long and Bliss<sup>296</sup> have observed the effects of sulfanilamide in more than 60 cases of subacute bacterial endocarditis. They report five "cures"; in four of these patients the infection was engrafted on a congenital lesion, and in the fifth case there was a rheumatic background.

I still give sulfanilamide to every patient under my care who is suffering from subacute bacterial endocarditis. If the drug is well borne, I continue it in sufficient dosage to maintain the concentration of 10 to 15 mg. per cent. I have always used sulfanilamide by mouth. The only tests of efficacy of this treatment are the blood cultures.\*

Sulfapyridine gives the same results in subacute bacterial endocarditis as sulfanilamide. Bacterial growth disappears from the blood culture as soon as the drug is administered. In some cases this is attended by a fall

\* All blood cultures for *Streptococcus viridans* should be incubated for at least 10 days before a negative report is made; this precaution is especially advisable when a chemotherapeutic agent is present in the blood sample.

in the temperature. When the drug is withdrawn, and in some cases while it is still being given, all the clinical features of the disease return in much the same intensity as before. Long and Bliss advise the use of a total daily dose of 0.1 Gm. per kilogram of body weight in patients weighing up to 60 kilograms. The dose should be divided and given at intervals of six hours.

Kelson and White<sup>153</sup> have recently reported their experience in using sulfapyridine combined with heparin. They call attention to the fact that the streptococci lie near the periphery of the vegetations embedded in fibrin and platelets that act as an efficient wall preventing the contact of leukocytes with the bacteria. Heparin, an anticoagulant, is used to limit the growth of the vegetations, to encourage fibroblastic invasion of the area, and to prevent, if possible, embolic accidents that invariably follow the extensive thrombus formation.

Technic of the method proposed by Kelson and White is as follows: dissolve 10 cc. of heparin (10,000 units) in 500 cc. of physiologic saline and administer by uninterrupted intravenous drip day and night for 14 days. The flow is regulated to maintain venous clotting time (normally below 20 minutes) at approximately one hour. Clotting time must be determined before treatment, twice during the first day and then daily until the heparin is discontinued. The sulfapyridine in suitable amounts is started (Table V) from four to seven days before the heparin and continued during the heparin treatment and for one week following its withdrawal. Blood transfusions are given if the blood count falls below 3,500,000 red blood cells. To increase the efficiency of fibrous repair, the patient is saturated with vitamin C. It is well to give 200 mg. of cevitamic acid by mouth four times a day for three days, and then continue it in daily doses of 100 mg.

Three of the first six patients reported by Kelson and White who were able to take the heparin for more than a week showed striking improvement and have remained free of evidences of the disease for periods of ten weeks, 18 weeks, and four weeks, respectively, after discontinuing treatment. These afebrile intervals are much longer than usually occur in control cases.

Certain dangers attend the use of heparin, but these must always be viewed in the light of the hopeless prognosis that the disease invariably carries with it. Two patients of this series had toxic reactions to the heparin, death resulting in one case in 17 hours. Another danger that must be considered with the use of heparin, especially in a disease like subacute bacterial endocarditis, is fatal hemorrhage due to interference with clotting following embolic episodes. Friedman and his associates<sup>108</sup> emphasize this danger following heparin in their report of a single case where a fatal cerebral hemorrhage terminated the picture ten days after heparin was administered. These authors also believe that some danger attends the sudden liberation of large quantities of bacteria when the vegetations are broken up.



The final opinion in regard to the effect of heparin-sulfapyridine therapy in subacute bacterial endocarditis must await the result of further careful clinical and laboratory studies. Additional animal experiments must be carried out to prove the action of heparin in the concentrations recommended. Does it actually prevent the deposition of platelets and fibrin on the valves as claimed? Will this action allow Nature to gain the upper hand and produce firm healing in these areas? These answers, we hope,

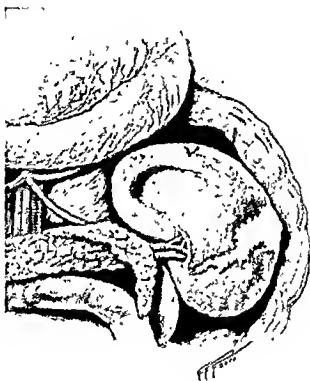


FIG. 87. Subacute bacterial endocarditis. Infarct of spleen following embolism

will soon be obtained. Meanwhile, every effort should be directed toward early diagnosis when the vegetations are fresh and small, for only under these circumstances can we hope that this plan of attack will have the success that the early case reports have led us to expect.

For the present it must not be assumed that a cure has been found. My personal experience with heparin in subacute bacterial endocarditis has been most discouraging. The dangers, in my opinion, are prohibitive even when we consider the nature of the disease this therapy has been fashioned to combat, and they should always be explained to the patient's family before the treatment is begun. Heparin should only be used in the

hospital where its effects can be constantly observed and the results appraised after an adequate follow up period.

In the presentation of this new plan of chemotherapeutic attack with its many variations, we have digressed for the moment from the case under discussion. Embolic manifestations showed the same tendency to occur during the second week, in fact, were more frequent after sulfanilamide was begun. On the tenth hospital day the patient died suddenly from what we considered was a massive cerebral embolism.

The autopsy showed old rheumatic lesions of the mitral and aortic valves with large masses of vegetations in both locations. A large splenic infarct (Fig. 87) explained the abdominal pain that was present on admission. Both kidneys showed the numerous scars and petechiae (see Fig. 85) that are so characteristic of subacute bacterial endocarditis.

#### STREPTOCOCCUS VIRIDANS SEPTICEMIA (SUBACUTE BACTERIAL ENDOCARDITIS?)—ATTEMPTED CURE BY EXCISION OF ARTERIOVENOUS ANEURYSM

**Case 27.** T. B., a negro laborer of 36, was admitted to the Philadelphia General Hospital on 9/9/38, complaining of pain in the joints, chills, and fever.

**HISTORY.** The patient was well until a month before admission when he developed a chill following considerable out-of-door exertion. This was followed the next day by joint pain and fever. The fever continued until the time of admission to the hospital a month later. During this time he lost 20 pounds in weight.

**PAST MEDICAL HISTORY.** A lesion suggestive of chancre was present 20 years prior to admission. There was a gunshot wound of the left thigh nine years before admission.

**PHYSICAL EXAMINATION.** T. 100° F, B.P. 110/45. The area of cardiac dulness was increased in all diameters. The apex beat was palpable in the fifth interpace 13 cm. to the left of the midclavicular line. No thrills were present. The pulse was rapid, Corrigan in type, and the rhythm was regular. There was a loud blowing systolic murmur heard over the entire precordium, louder in the upright position, and a diastolic murmur was heard over the base of the heart. The pulmonary second sound was accentuated. The liver edge was firm and smooth and distinctly palpable under the right costal margin. The spleen was palpable. A thrill was felt over the femoral canal, 2 cm. below Poupart's ligament, in an area measuring 16 sq. cm. On auscultation, over the point of maximum intensity of the thrill, a desfering bruit was heard that could also be detected along the proximal vessels to the umbilicus and along the distal vessels to the ankle. Digital pressure over the point of greatest intensity caused both bruit and thrill to disappear. Reflexes were normal except the patellar and Achilles on the left side which were absent. Pulsations of the popliteal, posterior tibial and dorsalis pedis were readily felt on the right but were barely palpable on the left side. No varicosities or edema were noted in either thigh, leg, or foot. No clubbing of the fingers or toes was present. The skin temperature was the same on both sides. The blood pressure in the right arm measured 120/80, in the left arm 93/50, in the right leg, 175/75, and in the left leg, 85/50. The venous pressure varied from 115 mm. to 125 mm.

**LABORATORY DATA.** A blood culture taken on the day of admission showed 120 colonies of *Streptococcus viridans* per cc. of blood. A roentgen-ray study of the heart showed enlargement in the transverse diameter. There was hypertrophy of the left ventricle and some widening of the aorta (Fig. 83A). A film taken after compression of the arteriovenous aneurysm (Fig. 83B) showed the heart to be slightly smaller and mottled densities in the lung fields not as marked as before compression. An electrocardiogram was essentially negative. Wassermann negative.

**CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS.** Arteriovenous aneurysm. Probable focus for *S. viridans* septicemia. Cardiac hypertrophy with aortic regurgitation, etiologic type unknown.

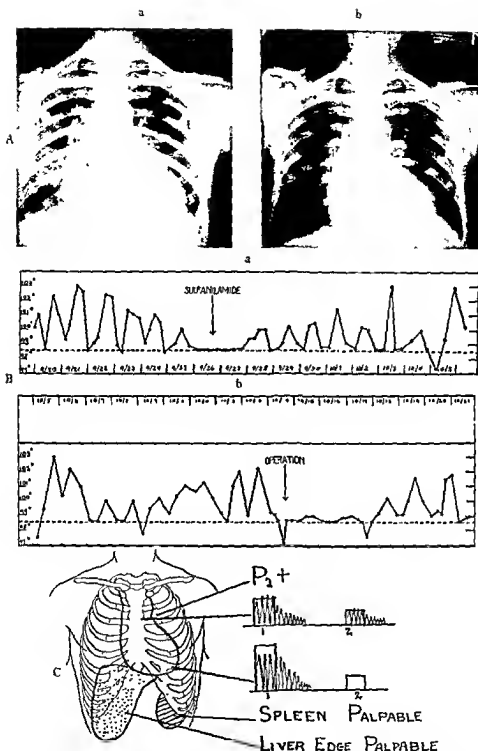


FIG. 88. A. Roentgenograms showing heart size (a) before compression and (b) after compression of the arteriovenous communication.  
 B. Temperature charts showing (a) effect of sulfanilamide therapy and (b) effect of operation.  
 C. Chart illustrating physical findings.

**Discussion.** Following admission the fever persisted, and the anemia became more pronounced. A second blood culture again showed *S. viridans*, so it was evident that a focus was present and active. Viewing the degree of cardiac damage, it would appear that the blood stream infection, if primary in the aneurysmal varix, had already reached the heart valves. Continued observations, however, failed to disclose any change in the character of the murmurs, consequently operation to remove the arteriovenous aneurysm was considered. If syphilitic heart disease were present with valves undamaged by the blood stream infection, removal of the infected varix offered the possibility of cure. On the other hand, if endocardial involvement already existed, the operation could do no harm and might benefit the patient to the extent of removing the strain of the arteriovenous aneurysm on the already damaged heart.

The continued absence of embolic manifestations was a point against the involvement of the mitral or aortic valves or the endocardium of the left side of the heart. Evidence of damage to the femoral artery and vein and of the re-establishment of a subsequent fistula was sufficient to make us suspect that the point of origin of the septicemia might be in this area. Sulfanilamide was tried from 9/21/38 to 9/26/38 (Fig. 88B), and it succeeded in producing a transient fall in the temperature to normal and a temporary reduction in the number of *S. viridans* colonies in the blood stream. Since a marked increase in the degree of anemia was noted, blood transfusions were given. When sulfanilamide was discontinued, the temperature returned, and the number of colonies per cc. in the blood culture rose to the former level.

After repeated trials, the status of the collateral circulation was found to be excellent; consequently surgical removal of the arteriovenous aneurysm was decided upon. A drawing (Fig. 89) made at the time of the operation shows the dissection of the aneurysmal communication between the left femoral artery and vein in this patient. After ligation, the entire aneurysmal sac was removed. Examination of the specimen showed on the arterial side of the communicating channel, a ring of dark, red, friable vegetations. No vegetations were present on the venous side of the orifice. Microscopic examination of the sections using hematoxylin and eosin stain showed small clumps of dark blue cocci-like bodies, interpreted as being bacteria, similar to the bacterial masses commonly seen on the heart valves in cases of subacute bacterial endocarditis.

After operation the leg showed little change. There was a slight decrease in the temperature of the operated side and a very slight swelling. The patient's temperature (Fig. 88B) promptly fell to normal following the operation. The cardiac rate likewise dropped, and clinical improvement was evident. For nearly a week we were of the opinion that cure of the blood-stream infection following the excision of the focus containing the vegetations had taken place. However, we were mistaken. At the end of the first postoperative week, the blood culture became positive, and the temperature again began to show a gradual elevation. On transfer back



FIG. 89. A. Drawing made during operation showing dissection and ligation of the aneurysmal sac. B. Sac opened showing position of vegetations. (From New Intern Clin, 3, 1939.)

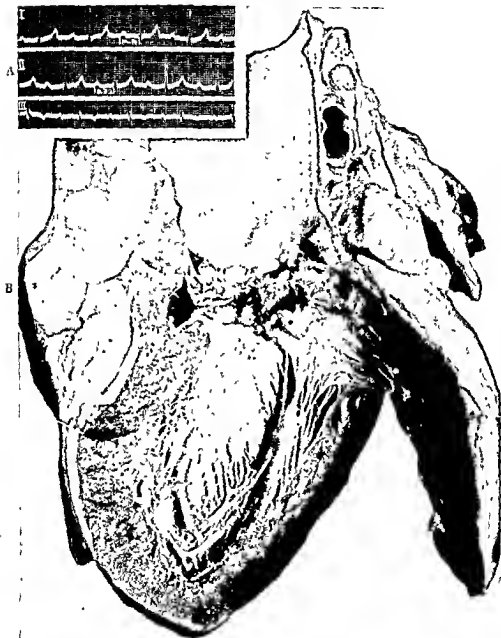


FIG. 90. A. The electrocardiogram. Note prolongation of the P-R intervals to 0.32 second.

B. Subacute bacterial endocarditis superimposed upon calcific aortic stenosis. The margins of the leaflets are fused, thickened and calcified. Note the extreme hypertrophy of the left ventricle and the smooth aortic wall above the valve. (Autopsy No. 27,911, Philadelphia General Hospital.)

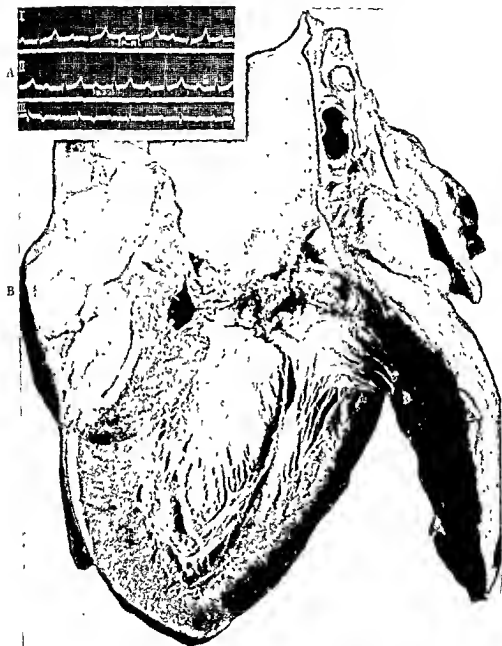


FIG. 90. A. The electrocardiogram. Note prolongation of the P-R Intervals to 0.32 second.

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to the medical ward, sulfapyridine was begun, but the effect was the same as observed following sulfanilamide. The temperature fell to normal, and the blood cultures were reported sterile from 11/16/38 to 11/30/38. On the latter date, increasing dyspnea, cyanosis, and edema ushered in a rather sudden attack of congestive failure, and the patient died. Autopsy was refused.

Although we were unable to duplicate the success of Hamman and Rienhoff<sup>146</sup> and obtain a radical cure in this patient, we believe that if we had seen him earlier and had operated on him at once, the story might have had a different ending. This case illustrates a type of heart disease rarely encountered where cure may be possible by excision of an infected arteriovenous communication.

While we are discussing the value of operative procedures in subacute bacterial endocarditis, attention must be called to the recommendation of splenectomy made by Riesman.<sup>316</sup> When the spleen is large, the patient's nutritional state good, and congestive failure absent, this operation imposes little additional risk. The spleen is involved early in the course of the disease; consequently its role in feeding the blood stream may be an important one. Viewed in this light, its removal seems just as logical as the extirpation of the pelvic organs to prevent continual infections in gonococcal endocarditis or the removal of the arteriovenous aneurysm in the case just presented.

The incidence of subacute bacterial endocarditis in patients with uncomplicated patent ductus arteriosus is high. In Abbott's series of 92 cases, death was caused by subacute bacterial endocarditis in 21. Graybiel, Strieder and Boyer<sup>149</sup> were the first to propose surgical ligation of the ductus in these cases in an attempt to shut off the pathway to the blood stream. They point out that the infection begins in relation to the pulmonary orifice of the ductus, extending often to the pulmonary valves but rarely to the aorta. Hence, if an early diagnosis is made in cases of patent ductus arteriosus, which is not impossible if they are constantly under observation, surgical intervention must be considered. Ligation has been successfully carried out by Gross (page 339) and seems justified, in selected instances, in an attempt to bar the bacteria and the vegetations from the blood stream in the hope that natural forces may be effective in healing the areas.

#### CALCIFIC AORTIC STENOSIS—SUPERIMPOSED SUBACUTE BACTERIAL ENDOCARDITIS—AUTOPSY

**Case 28.** W. H., a German cabinet maker of 49, was admitted to the Philadelphia General Hospital on 2/7/34 complaining of cough and dyspnea.

**HISTORY.** The patient was in fairly good health until two months before admission when he noticed chest pain that increased on exertion and radiated to the left arm. Dyspnea was present. A "buzzing" was felt in the chest when in bed at night. Two weeks before admission, edema of the ankles appeared for the first time; this increased in severity until the day of admission.

The patient denied venereal disease. There was no past history of rheumatic infection.

**PHYSICAL EXAMINATION.** BP. 110/90. T. 101° F. P. 90. Petechiae present on the



to the medical ward, sulfapyridine was begun, but the effect was the same as observed following sulfanilamide. The temperature fell to normal, and the blood cultures were reported sterile from 11/16/38 to 11/30/38. On the latter date, increasing dyspnea, cyanosis, and edema ushered in a rather sudden attack of congestive failure, and the patient died. Autopsy was refused.

Although we were unable to duplicate the success of Hamman and Rienhoff<sup>140</sup> and obtain a radical cure in this patient, we believe that if we had seen him earlier and had operated on him at once, the story might have had a different ending. This case illustrates a type of heart disease rarely encountered where cure may be possible by excision of an infected arteriovenous communication.

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The patient denied venereal disease. There was no past history of rheumatic infection.

**PHYSICAL EXAMINATION.** B.P. 110/90. T. 101° F. P. 90. Petechiae present on the

conjunctivae. The apex beat was in the sixth interspace, 12 cm. from the midsternal line. A marked thrill was palpable over the second interspace to the right of the sternum. A harsh systolic murmur was present over the same area, transmitted to the vessels of the neck. A systolic murmur was heard over the margin of the cardiac apex. Râles were heard over both lung bases. The liver edge was tender and palpable a hand's breadth below the right costal margin. The spleen was not palpable. No clubbing.

LABORATORY DATA. Blood culture negative. Wassermann four plus, Kahn negative. R.B.C., 3,200,000; W.B.C., 5,600; hemoglobin, 65 per cent (Sahli); P. 76, L. 24. Electrocardiogram: prolongation of the P-R intervals (First stage heart block) (Fig. 90A).

Roentgenogram: dilated aorta and cardiac enlargement (probably luetic).

CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS. A. Etiologic: Rheumatic? Arteriosclerosis? Syphilis? B. Anatomic: Cardiac enlargement. Aortic stenosis. Relative mitral insufficiency. C. Physiologic: First stage heart block. Congestive cardiac failure. D. Functional Classification: Class 4. Therapeutic Classification: Class E.

COURSE. Congestive failure increased in spite of the usual therapeutic measures. The blood cultures were negative although the patient had an irregular temperature for two weeks before death.

AUTOPSY. The heart weighed 660 Gm. There was hypertrophy of the left ventricle. The mitral valve was normal. The aortic valve was entirely destroyed and replaced by calcium. Superimposed upon this were firm masses of thrombi, some of which showed calcification. The end of a slate pencil could scarcely be pushed through the unopened aortic valve. The aorta above the valve was smooth and conspicuously free of any pathologic change in contrast to the marked calcific lesion of the valve (Fig. 90B).

Discussion. The aortic regurgitation and the positive Wassermann reaction in a man of 46 first suggested syphilis as the etiology. However, in the presence of the signs of subacute bacterial endocarditis, the possibility that syphilis was the only etiologic factor diminished. While bacterial endocarditis may be superimposed on syphilitic aortitis and valvulitis, as the recent studies of Martin and Adams<sup>279</sup> indicate, nevertheless it is a rare event. The diagnosis should always be considered, however, in the presence of sepsis of undetermined origin, a positive Wassermann reaction, evidence of aortic insufficiency and a negative rheumatic history. In this patient the harsh systolic murmur and thrill discovered over the aortic area in the absence of aneurysmal dilatation favor the diagnosis of a stenotic (rheumatic) lesion. The calcific type of aortic stenosis has been discussed elsewhere (page 127).

The petechiae and the course of the fever in this patient were characteristic of subacute bacterial endocarditis, even in the absence of a positive blood culture, and also accounted for the positive Wassermann reaction. This occurrence of biologic false positive Wassermann reactions in the presence of subacute bacterial endocarditis is not unusual. Consequently it is not surprising that neoarsphenamine therapy has been suggested for these patients. Stokes, however, opposes its use.<sup>237</sup> Autopsy in this case proved the absence of syphilis and verified the correctness of this interpretation of the serology.

The rapidity of the organization and calcification of the thrombi in this case in the absence of any treatment directed toward the process shows the natural tendency of the disease to heal.

While the bacteriologist who isolates the *S. viridans* from the blood stream may refer to this organism as an invader of low virulence, yet we are beaten as soon as he makes the diagnosis. The mechanical features of the infection in most instances close the picture. Masses of thrombi build up, break off, and are carried to vital centers by the blood stream. In this patient it is hard to understand why the organism would pick out such a cardiac desert-area as a totally calcified valve for implantation. The valve, it is true, was the seat of previous damage, but certainly in its calcified state it contained less blood supply than other lesions.

The healing tendencies in this disease are evident in this desperate and almost successful attempt to organize and calcify the thrombi. However, the increase in the obstruction that this produced almost completely closed the valvular orifice and precipitated cardiac failure. The absence of bacteria in many blood cultures is proof of the fact that the healing process was gaining the upper hand. If, in the future, we can keep the blood stream sterile in subacute bacterial endocarditis and prevent large thrombotic masses from forming on the valve sites long enough for fibrous tissue to invade and organize the mass already present, we may succeed in conquering this infection.

# 6

## SYPHILITIC CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE

The same medicine will both harm and cure me.—Ovid, *Tristia*, Bk. ii, 1.20.

The incidence of cardiovascular syphilis in any country today is an index of the intelligence of its population in general and of the ability and foresight of its medical profession in particular. While rheumatic infection remains one of the grave problems of modern civilization, syphilitic heart disease can be greatly minimized by the recognition and adequate treatment of early lues. Considering the high mortality rate among patients with advanced cardiovascular syphilis, it is small wonder that a nationwide intensive campaign was launched recently to educate the public and bring the early cases under competent medical supervision. The careless attitude of the average private physician in regard to the treatment of syphilis has been responsible for organized efforts on the part of the governments of many countries to combat the disease. Since a full understanding of the anatomic and pathologic aspects of syphilitic involvement of the heart and great vessels is a necessary prelude to intelligent management, a brief review of these fundamental principles will precede the discussion of therapy.

### THE LESION

**Chancre.** The primary lesion of syphilis is the chancre. Accumulative evidence points to the fact that the blood stream is invaded by the *Treponema pallidum* before the appearance of this primary lesion. It may be possible in many cases that the spirochete has already reached the aorta before clinical manifestations of syphilitic infection are noted. When a chancre is in evidence, local, medical or surgical measures directed toward the initial lesion are of no avail, since both blood stream and lymphatic system have transported the spirochete far beyond the reach of regional medication. Many spirochetes invade nearby lymph nodes and are killed by the resistance forces of the body. Others penetrate deep into the lymphatic channels, finally reaching the thoracic duct and the venous blood stream. During the initial shower of spirochetes, many penetrate as far as the lymph nodes in the thorax and from here by lymph movement reach the vasa vasorum in the aorta.

**Obliterative Endarteritis.** In these small vessels within the artery wall, an initial obliterative endarteritis develops, which may slowly spread

to the whole ascending portion of the aorta. The seriousness of this destructive process can readily be realized when we recall that the cusps of the aortic valve are attached in this area. When this section of the aorta becomes the seat of scar formation, the valve is drawn backward and regurgitation develops. It is important to note that the damage takes place without stenosis, which distinguishes it from the rheumatic type in which adhesions develop between neighboring cusps, obstructing the flow of blood and at the same time interfering with valvular function.

**Aneurysm.** If the spirochetal invasion in the aortic wall is unchecked, it plays havoc with the muscular media. Degeneration of this coat is reflected in the pallor and wrinkling of the intima. The whole aortic wall becomes weakened by the destruction of this vital tissue, eventually dilates, and saccular aneurysms result. If the process of dilatation widens the aortic valve and causes regurgitation, the heart will be affected, with the development of cardiac hypertrophy. However, if regurgitation does not occur and the coronary ostia escape, an aneurysm of the aorta usually has no effect on cardiac size or function. It can, of course, cause symptoms by pressure on any of the surrounding structures, depending on the part of the arch involved and the direction in which the sacculation points. For example, the aneurysm may press on the trachea and bronchi with the appearance of the typical "brassy" cough. Adhesions to the trachea may give rise to a tracheal tug (Oliver's sign), while compression of a bronchus, if long continued, will result in atelectasis. If the aneurysm points posteriorly, it may erode the vertebrae and cause severe pain. The erosion, on the other hand, may be in an anterior direction, in which event a pulsating tumor will appear on the anterior chest wall (Fig. 91). Aphonia appears when the recurrent laryngeal nerve is involved in the process. Many times, if aneurysms do not press on the structures above-mentioned and do not cause erosion, they may reach a large size without attracting attention.

If aortic dilatation is moderate and regurgitation develops, the pressure on the weakened arch is relieved, and no aneurysm appears. However, the situation is still far from a happy one, since cardiac hypertrophy occurs, and the patient will eventually succumb to congestive failure.

The mouths of the coronary arteries are situated in a bad neighborhood, as far as the syphilitic patient is concerned, and may be invaded early in the disease, in which event serious symptoms occur. Angina appears and with it the likelihood of sudden death at any time. Willis<sup>400, 410</sup> has shown that the coronary arteries occasionally rise above the level of the sinuses of Valsalva, and in this location they stand a much greater chance of involvement in a syphilitic process than when they take their origin from the aorta at a lower level. The effect of a syphilitic involvement of the coronaries differs in no way, as far as the patient's symptoms are concerned, from an arteriosclerotic process. An anoxemia is produced in the heart muscle, and this is attended by pain. In syphilis the coronary arteries are generally free of involvement along their course, which may

account for the infrequency of thrombosis. Coronary occlusions following arteriosclerotic heart disease are more common during the winter months, while those that complicate syphilitic aortitis show no seasonal variation. Bean and Mills<sup>23</sup> believe this is a result of the steady progression of the syphilitic lesion.

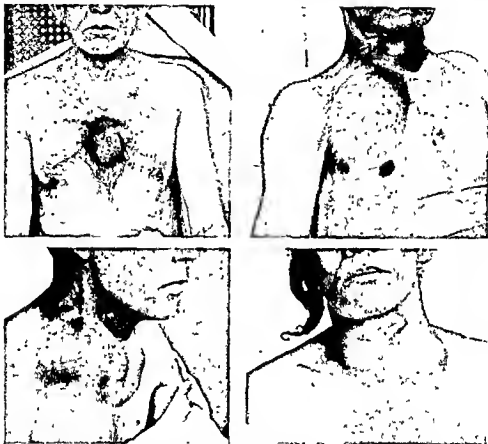


FIG. 91. Aneurysms of the aorta. Swellings of this type are at times confused with other tumors of the chest wall.

The heart itself is seldom invaded by the spirochete. If secondary changes are discovered in the heart muscle in syphilis, they are usually produced by the narrowing of the coronary mouths in the aorta, or result from a complicating arteriosclerosis. Gummas of the heart, producing heart block or other symptoms, are rare. Von Haam and Ogden<sup>143</sup> collected reports of only seven cases from the literature between 1845 and 1935. In a study of 5213 autopsies of their own they reported gummatous lesions of the heart in only three instances.

From this description, it is evident that the earlier the cardiac invasion is detected, the better will be the result of specific therapy. However, this

cannot be accomplished unless we suspect the presence of the infection. The constantly alert physician will report a much higher incidence of cardiovascular syphilis in his practice because his suspicions are aroused by small details in the history and physical examination. If, instead of dismissing these small departures from normal, he follows them with determination until positive proof is obtained either by further study, from a confession, from the laboratory, or by a consultation, cardiovascular complications of middle life may be largely prevented. The student makes the mistake of regarding the aneurysm or the *cor bovinum* resulting from aortic regurgitation, seen at autopsy, as typical evidence of cardiovascular syphilis. He returns to the wards to seek them clinically and later in his practice, as a result of a lack of knowledge, fails to recognize the earlier manifestations.

## SIGNS

At this point, the question properly arises: What are the early signs of cardiovascular syphilis? The different criteria in use in various clinics and the lack of uniformity of opinion even among experts in the matter serve to confuse the practitioner. We must acknowledge at the start that this diagnosis is most difficult, and the criteria are far from settled. However, the careful physician should not be discouraged, for here is a clinical problem that should challenge his skill and arouse his interest.

**Aortic Second Sound.** Unless the syphilitic process involves the coronary mouths and causes aortic regurgitation or weakening of the aortic wall, its presence is apt to elude the physician who does not always keep the possibility in mind. Certainly the scars in the first part of the aorta, which the pathologist so triumphantly points to at autopsy, can furnish him no clue at the bedside. The higher up in the arch these scars are situated, the greater will be the clinical silence they maintain. However, something can still be said concerning the character of the aortic second sound that accompanies this structural alteration. Its tambour or drum-like quality in the presence of syphilis may reflect a tissue change progressing in the aorta as a whole. If we keep in mind the fact that hypertension or arteriosclerosis produce structural alterations, and, consequently, a similar change in the tone of the aortic second sound, a tambour quality of the aortic second sound should serve to sharpen our suspicion. It is not in itself diagnostic.

The systolic aortic murmur that may be heard at the time of early syphilitic invasion is a less certain sign. It, too, may accompany arteriosclerosis, but at the same time, it can also serve as a building stone in our diagnosis of early syphilitic aortitis.

**Fluoroscopic Examination.** If the patient who has these indefinite signs on physical examination is examined fluoroscopically, suspicion may be strengthened. The aorta in early syphilis is slightly wider and more dense than normal (page 43), and in addition there may be noted a

slightly increased pulsation. These changes, in my opinion, are most suggestive and valuable when reported by an observer who has had considerable experience with the fluoroscopic method. Even then they do not establish the diagnosis beyond doubt, but only forge another link of similar strength in the chain of evidence.

Other systems of the body may contribute more clear cut evidence of syphilis if the physical examination is carried beyond the region of the heart. For example, the presence of signs of neurosyphilis should be sought, since this form of involvement often co-exists in the same patient. In the Co-operative Clinical Studies, in 191 cases of uncomplicated syphilitic aortitis in which lumbar punctures were made within a month of the detection of aortitis, 49 per cent showed unquestionable spinal-fluid abnormalities. Consequently a spinal-fluid examination is an indispensable part of the examination of every patient who has cardiovascular syphilis.

**Unequal, Simultaneous Blood Pressure.** Herzog<sup>150</sup> states that the diagnosis of syphilitic aortitis should be suspected when the blood pressures taken in both arms simultaneously are shown to be unequal. To accomplish this, two blood pressure cuffs are needed. These are connected to the manometer by means of a Y-tube. The use of a sphygmophone enables the observer to detect the exact time of the appearance of the pulse beats in each arm.

We cannot depend on any abnormalities of the electrocardiogram to diagnose syphilis. Heart block occurs in association with sclerotic or coronary disease but is rarely caused by syphilis. Auricular fibrillation is very rarely present as a complication of syphilitic aortitis, a fact that may be valuable at times in ruling out syphilis in doubtful cases.

## SYMPTOMS

The symptoms that are encountered in syphilitic aortitis are few, and these are by no means characteristic. The fact that they sometimes tend to be sudden in onset, however, should arouse suspicion. The abrupt appearance of the signs of circulatory failure: dyspnea, cough, edema, substernal pain, particularly in young patients, may be significant. The dyspnea may remain as a nocturnal occurrence, while other signs of failure may progress. These, however, are late manifestations and usually come on at a time when treatment offers less permanent benefit.

Reports from the various clinics show that serologic tests in patients with cardiovascular syphilis are positive in 75 to 80 per cent of the cases.<sup>68, 274, 276</sup> This figure, however, is much less when previous, although inadequate, treatment has been given.<sup>68</sup> Consequently, while a negative Wassermann test does not rule out syphilis (page 56), its routine use will serve to bring under scrutiny a larger group of patients, before damage is evident in the cardiovascular system, at a stage when properly direct treatment may prevent its development.



## PROBLEM OF EARLY DIAGNOSIS

In the light of this review, it is evident that the detection of cardiovascular syphilis is quite easy if it is advanced, but difficult, if not impossible, in its earlier stages. The earlier the diagnosis, the greater will be the success of the treatment from the cardiovascular standpoint. No clue that can be obtained from a complete history, a thorough physical examination including neurologic survey, and laboratory study (roentgen ray, fluoroscopy, electrocardiogram, serologic tests of blood, and a complete spinal-fluid examination including cell count, globulin estimation, colloidal curve, and quantitative Wassermann test) should be omitted. Cardiovascular syphilis should then be diagnosed in from 5 to 25 per cent of the cases of heart disease in the practice of the average physician, depending, of course, on his location. If his figures are less than the minimum stated above, he is probably missing the diagnosis in some instances.

Welty<sup>383</sup> has recently analyzed the incidence of cardiovascular syphilis in the records of 15,000 consecutive autopsies at the Philadelphia General Hospital. In 1,040 cases (6.93 per cent) cardiovascular syphilis was diagnosed. Aneurysm was present in 192 patients, aortic insufficiency in 216 and simple aortitis was found in the remaining number.<sup>632</sup> Males predominated in this series (74 per cent), while 68 per cent were negroes. When these cases are divided into five groups of 300 autopsies each, a decreasing incidence of cardiovascular syphilis is seen (Table VI).

TABLE VI  
DECREASING INCIDENCE OF CARDIOVASCULAR SYPHILIS AT  
THE PHILADELPHIA GENERAL HOSPITAL (After Welty)

| Years        | Number of Cases | Incidence     | Ratio           |
|--------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------------|
| 1927 to 1930 | 276             | 92 per 1000   | 1 per 11 deaths |
| 1930 to 1932 | 231             | 77 per 1000   | 1 per 13 deaths |
| 1932 to 1934 | 191             | 63.6 per 1000 | 1 per 16 deaths |
| 1934 to 1935 | 174             | 58 per 1000   | 1 per 17 deaths |
| 1935 to 1937 | 168             | 56 per 1000   | 1 per 18 deaths |

## TREATMENT

## SPECIFIC THERAPY

During recent years, many problems in the treatment of cardiovascular syphilis have been solved. We can now formulate a scheme of therapy for each case upon much more firm ground than was formerly possible, when it was the prevailing custom to recommend the same program of treatment for all syphilitic patients. The less specialized therapy of yesterday was attended by numerous accidents among the cardiac patients of the group who had early aortic involvement. Vigorous treatment with arsenicals was

followed by sudden death in many cases, while it produced in others a rapid onset of the symptoms of heart failure. This led the medical pendulum to swing away from the use of the arsenicals in cardiac patients. Today we are in the mid-position and are again employing arsenicals in cases of uncomplicated syphilitic aortitis, but we have learned to be cautious and precede their use by adequate preparation with slower acting and safer drugs.

The early accidents following the injection of arsenicals were due many times to therapeutic shock (Herxheimer reaction) caused by too sudden destruction of large numbers of spirochetes and the liberation of their endotoxins. This was invariably attended by a sudden swelling or reaction in the aorta about the mouths of the coronary arteries. Moore<sup>274</sup> believes that the Herxheimer reaction may cause a coronary occlusion, a rupture of an aneurysm, or if there is cerebral vascular involvement, the sudden edema and infiltration may cause a cerebral hemorrhage. In other cases the arsphenamine may prove too toxic for the already damaged heart muscle and cause ventricular tachycardia and fibrillation. Vigorous approach with arsenicals in other cases may be followed by immediate clinical improvement, but after this by a rapid downhill course (therapeutic paradox) caused by the scar tissue replacement in the luetic areas.

A safe procedure to prevent these reactions is to begin treatment of the patient who has syphilitic aortitis with a heavy metal and iodide. Bismuth is the heavy metal of choice. First introduced in 1921 by Sazerac and Levaditi, bismuth has succeeded in completely replacing mercury in the treatment of cardiovascular syphilis. When given by intramuscular injection, this heavy metal is slowly absorbed and excreted, and a low but uniform concentration is maintained in the tissues. As long as the bismuth is present, the multiplication of the spirochetes is prevented, although they are not destroyed. This fact can be proved by animal experimentation. While the exact mechanism of this action of bismuth on the spirochete is unknown, the effect is not the same as that exerted by the arsenicals. In the sense that it prevents multiplication of spirochetes in the syphilitic lesions thus allowing the defense mechanisms of the body aided by the iodides to heal the lesions, bismuth may possess "resistance-building" properties.

The necessary concentration of bismuth can be maintained in the body by weekly intramuscular injections of one of the preparations of the insoluble salts. The soluble salts are painful, more toxic, and require more frequent administration. Consequently they are more expensive and less convenient for the patient. I prefer bismuth salicylate, a ten per cent suspension in oil. The dose is 0.2 Gm. (2 cc.) once weekly. This preparation causes very little local discomfort, and toxic reactions following its use are rare.

Intramuscular injections of bismuth preparations are best given into the inner angle of the upper outer quadrant of the buttock (Fig. 92), using a 2- to 2½-inch (21-gauge) needle on a 2-cc. syringe. The drug is

introduced deep into the body of the muscle. Since an insoluble preparation is being used, an aspiration test is essential before the injection is made to detect a chance entry into a deep blood vessel. Following the injection, the site should be massaged for a minute to favor distribution

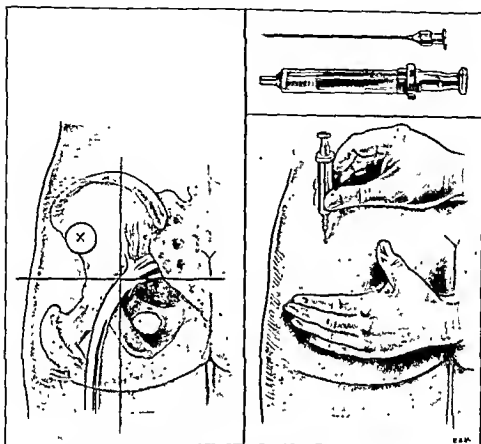


FIG. 92. Equipment and technic for intramuscular injections.

A. 2 cc. syringe (21 gauge),  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inch needle.

B. Site of injection: inner angle of upper outer quadrant.

C. Technic of injection.

and better absorption of the drug. Sterile abscesses following bismuth salicylate in oil are infrequent.

Early in the course of bismuth therapy a bluish-gray line may appear at the gum margins. Less often a stomatitis appears, particularly in patients whose oral hygiene is poor. Few alterations in renal function have been observed following a course of bismuth in the usual dosage, and clinical evidences of liver damage are rare. Aching of the bones and muscles quite like that produced by grippy or influenzal infections is often complained of during bismuth therapy, but its cause so far is unknown. Seldom do

Herxheimer reactions occur when bismuth is used in the treatment of cardiovascular syphilis. On the whole the toxic effects produced by bismuth, compared to those observed following mercury and arsenicals, are few.

Intramuscular injections of bismuth, iodide therapy, and later the cautious use of intravenous injections of neoarsphenamine comprise the usual procedures of treatment in cardiovascular syphilis. Lately a preparation of bismuth for oral administration has appeared on the market. This semisolid, termed "sobisminol mass," is a complex, organic bismuth product, the exact chemical nature of which has not been fully established.<sup>332</sup> It is obtained by the interaction of sodium bismuthate, tri-isopropanolamine and propylene glycol and contains between 19.25 and 20.25 per cent of bismuth. The recommended adult dose consists of two to three capsules, each representing 150 mg. of metallic bismuth, taken with plenty of water at 10 A.M., 3 P.M., and 8 P.M. When continued in this dosage for from 10 to 12 weeks, they represent a course of bismuth therapy. For children the dose is one capsule three times a day. Such oral administration has been shown to produce a blood concentration of bismuth comparable to that following intramuscular injections. Satisfactory antisypilitic concentrations of bismuth are also found in the urine and cerebrospinal fluid.<sup>267</sup>

Sobisminol mass given orally may produce gastro-intestinal upsets in some patients, occasionally severe enough to cause them to discontinue the drug. This is a disadvantage. Bismuth stomatitis may appear, and a bismuth line has been noted in some instances. When the treatment is placed in the hands of the patient, dosage is less accurate, and there remains the tendency on the part of the patient to neglect to take the medicine as soon as improvement occurs. Furthermore, the physician is not apt to have as frequent contact with his patient, and this gives less opportunity to observe either the untoward effect of the drug or the progress of the cardiac lesion. No sustained bismuth effect is derived from the use of sobisminol by mouth, since the excretion of bismuth in the urine falls off rapidly as soon as the capsules are discontinued. Relapses, therefore, occur more readily, since no bismuth depot is established when the oral route is used. When intramuscular injections are used, the full amount of the drug is administered.

Occasionally some patients, for business or professional reasons, find it impossible to report to the physician at weekly intervals. Likewise, in rare instances intramuscular injections have to be discontinued because of pain and induration in the muscles. In these cases the temporary oral administration of bismuth is useful.

If oral bismuth therapy gains headway in the future, the distribution of preparations of the drug should be carefully controlled. Oral administration should remain under the physician's supervision, since self-medication in cardiovascular syphilis is extremely dangerous.

The use of iodides in the treatment of cardiovascular syphilis is based upon the local healing effect of these drugs. If given alone at any stage of the disease, they have little influence on the spirochete. When combined

with a heavy metal or an arsenical, symptoms are more speedily controlled, and the local healing produced by the iodide allows the more powerful antisyphilitic drugs to penetrate deeply into the tissues. A similar effect on necrotic tissue is seen when iodides are used in other granulomatous diseases, especially actinomycosis.

When administered by mouth, the absorption of the iodides is rapid. Either the potassium or the sodium salt may be used, although the latter is more expensive. It is best to prescribe iodides in concentrated solution:

|       |     |     |     |          |
|-------|-----|-----|-----|----------|
| KI    | ... | ... | ... | 50.0 Gm. |
| Water | .   | .   | ... | 50.0 cc. |

In this prescription one drop will contain approximately 0.065 Gm. (1 grain) of KI. The required dose should be dropped into a full glass of water or milk and given just before meals. The usual dose of the above prescription is 2 to 4 Gm. (30 to 60 grains) three times a day. Iodides should be administered for periods of three months twice a year in combination with the heavy metal and not with neoarsphenamine. When tuberculosis or simple goiter complicate the picture, the administration of iodides is contraindicated.

Some patients show an intolerance to iodides. Coryza and an unpleasant brassy taste in the mouth may be disregarded. However, if gastro-intestinal irritability develops or severe acneiform eruptions appear, the drug should be at least temporarily discontinued. In some instances the healing action of the iodides on syphilitic tissue with subsequent absorption of necrotic products may produce fever which subsides when the drug is withdrawn.

After the preliminary course of 12 weeks of bismuth and iodide, neoarsphenamine may be started cautiously. Doses of 0.1 Gm. (intravenously) should be administered at first and the amount gradually increased until 0.45 Gm. is given at the fifth dose of a ten injection series.<sup>67, 291</sup> Arsphenamine should never be used in cardiovascular syphilis.

Many variations are possible in the therapeutic schedule in this type of syphilitic involvement. It is difficult to recommend a schedule that will fit every case. Experience will soon show that each individual presents certain rules of his own, and the most successful result is achieved by the physician who learns to follow them. The age and build of the patient, the duration of the infection, the amount of previous treatment, and the social status are all factors of importance that must be considered. In short, in order to get the best result, the physician must be skilled in the art of medicine and be able to interpret the symptoms of the patient in terms of the structural changes. He should also be quick to detect any reactions that call for a pause in therapeutic activity.

If congestive failure is present when the patient is first seen, the usual measures described in Chapter 2 are carried out. Digitalis should be given to the point of digitalization and then continued in a maintenance amount. The organic mercurial diuretics are useful. Many of these patients

are unfit for heavy metals when first seen, but if edema clears and balance is restored, bismuth and potassium iodide may be started.

If aortic regurgitation is present and congestive manifestations have not appeared, after the 12 weeks of preparatory treatment, using bismuth and iodide, neoarsphenamine may be cautiously started, using an initial dose of 0.1 Gm. and increasing this dose gradually, depending on the body weight, until a maximum of 0.45 Gm. is reached in 12 treatments at weekly intervals. It is most important to avoid reactions of all types with this course of treatment. If reactions occur, arsenicals should be discontinued, and after a short rest period intramuscular injections of bismuth should be given. If no reactions are encountered and the course of arsenicals is completed, heavy metal and iodide for 12 weekly doses are again indicated. In the absence of untoward symptoms, these courses may be given alternately over a period of two years. In each case the cardiac lesion is the guide to treatment, and frequent examinations of the heart should be made.

When angina is present and syphilitic involvement of the coronary arteries is suspected, the prognosis is grave. It is well to send these patients to the hospital, if possible. Bed rest and potassium iodide supplemented by the usual measures directed toward the relief of the angina, are called for (Chapter 7). If improvement occurs, heavy metal may be added. I have never used arsenicals in this group of cases.

In the presence of aneurysms, great care should be taken to guard against reactions. Heavy metals, preferably bismuth, should initiate the treatment and should be continued with iodides for ten weeks. If arsenical therapy is used, start with exceptionally small doses (0.025 or 0.05 Gm.) and increase slowly to 0.2 Gm. in a 12 dose series. These patients should be examined frequently and carefully (see Case 98).

As stated in the recent summary of the Co-operative Clinic Group,<sup>68, 69</sup> the best treatment is prophylaxis. At least 30 injections of an arsenical and 60 injections of interim heavy metal (bismuth) administered under the continuous system while the patient is in the early stages of syphilis, is, after all, the best form of therapy for the prevention of cardiovascular involvement. This has been shown by Thompson and his co-workers in a survey of 260 individuals who contracted syphilis 15 to 25 years before the study was made. The incidence of cardiovascular involvement in the group was found to be 10 per cent, a figure that agrees with the observations of other investigators. However, in the group studied by Thompson, Comeau, and White<sup>74</sup> all of the cases showing evidence of cardiovascular syphilis gave a history of inadequate early treatment.

With treatment carefully planned and carried out, a marked symptomatic relief is possible in patients suffering from syphilitic invasion of the cardiovascular system. Proper therapy increases the average duration of life in the presence of uncomplicated syphilitic aortitis from 34 to 85 months.<sup>66</sup> The average duration of life in patients who are treated with

small doses of arsenicals exceeds the duration of life of patients who are treated with large doses.

### TREATMENT OF ANEURYSMS

WIRING; CAROTID-JUGULAR ANASTOMOSIS

(See page 229)

### ILLUSTRATIVE CASES

#### UNTREATED SYPHILITIC CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE—AORTITIS, AORTIC REGURGITATION AND CARDIAC ENLARGEMENT—DEATH FOLLOWING FIRST ATTACK OF CONGESTIVE FAILURE—AUTOPSY

**CASE 29.** J. M., a colored laborer of 43, was admitted to the Philadelphia General Hospital 2/7/31 complaining of shortness of breath, swelling of the legs and pain in the chest.

**HISTORY.** The dyspnea appeared a year before admission and gradually progressed to orthopnea. A month before admission precordial pain was noticed. It was referred to the left shoulder and appeared on slight exertion. Edema of the feet in the evening came on six weeks before admission, this increased rapidly and was generalized when the patient entered the hospital.

**PAST HISTORY.** Chancre at the age of 18. No treatment.

**PHYSICAL EXAMINATION.** Cyanosis, orthopnea, anasarca, B.P. 170/0, pulse 130, regular and Corrigan in type. The heart was enlarged to the left (L.B. 16.0 cm.). There was a diastolic murmur over the aortic area and absence of breath sounds accompanied by a flat percussion note over the right lower chest below the scapular angle (Fig. 93A).

**LABORATORY DATA.** Blood count normal. Wassermann reaction positive. The urine showed a cloud of albumin with hyaline casts.

The roentgenogram showed generalized cardiac enlargement, a wide aorta, and fluid at the right base.

The electrocardiogram showed a left axis deviation, inverted T1, low voltage QRS and slightly prolonged P-R intervals.

**CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS.** A. Etiologic: Syphilis. B. Anatomic: Cardiac enlargement, Aortic regurgitation, Aortitis involving the coronary ostia. C. Physiologic: Normal sinus rhythm. Anginal syndrome. Congestive cardiac failure. D. Functional Classification: Class 4. Therapeutic Classification: Class E.

**COURSE.** The patient died suddenly on the fourteenth hospital day.

**AUTOPSY** (Fig. 93B). There was considerable cardiac hypertrophy. The aortic valve leaflets were bound down to the aorta by syphilitic scar tissue. The thoracic aorta was dilated and the seat of striations typically luetic. The coronary orifices were stenosed, but the coronary arteries themselves were normal throughout their course.

**Discussion.** On admission this patient presented all the signs and symptoms of advanced congestive failure. The search for the etiologic background was a short one. An initial lesion at the age of 18 with no subsequent treatment, the negative rheumatic history, the race, the age, the evidence pointing to aortic regurgitation as the single lesion, and the positive Wassermann reaction made the diagnosis of syphilitic cardiovascular disease inescapable.

The usual rapid progress in the heart failure is evident. Symptoms first appeared six weeks before death. The anginal pain complained of on slight exertion suggests involvement of the coronary ostia in the syphilitic process;

A

PULSATING CAROTIDS

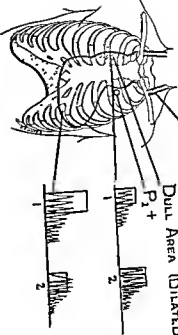
DULL AREA (DILATED AORTA)

P<sub>1</sub> +

1

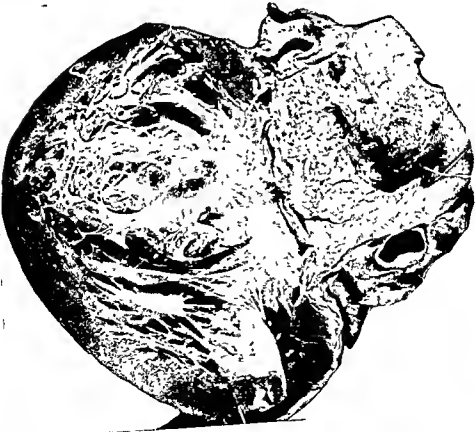
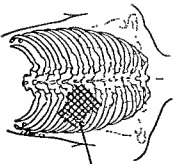
2

2



AREA OF FLATNESS  
AND

DISTANT BREATH SOUNDS





consequently the blood supply to the myocardium must be limited. This may have been an important factor in the rapid downhill course and may explain the failure of the usual therapeutic measures to restore compensation.

The history of the untreated primary lesion at the age of 18, and the long period of apparent latency of the infection (25 years), followed by rapidly developing signs of cardiac failure at the age of 43, are not uncommon. Syphilitic involvement of the heart and aorta can exist in the absence of symptoms for many years, as this man's story illustrates. The development of aortic regurgitation paved the way for the cardiac failure, and the coronary involvement hastened the end. The patient, during the development of the disease, had no occasion to seek medical advice. He felt well and continued to work as a laborer. When symptoms finally developed at the age of 42, they succeeded one another rapidly.

When cardiac failure appeared and the patient was admitted to the hospital, the heart and not the syphilis demanded attention. The measures employed in these cases are the same as in any case of congestive failure (Chapter 2). Angina should also be treated in the usual manner (Chapter 7). If severe anginal pain is present and is unrelieved by ordinary medical measures, alcoholic injections are to be considered (page 256).

#### RHEUMATIC HEART DISEASE MISTAKEN FOR SYPHILITIC AORTITIS IN PRESENCE OF POSITIVE WASSERMANN REACTION—AUTOPSY

**CASE 30.** C. B., an Italian shoemaker of 50, entered the Philadelphia General Hospital on 5/13/34 complaining of chest pain and increasing shortness of breath.

**HISTORY.** Dyspnea was present for some years but became worse the month before admission and was soon followed by edema. Chest pain on exertion was noted three weeks before admission.

**PAST HISTORY.** Negative for syphilis. Positive for rheumatism at age 25.

**PHYSICAL EXAMINATION.** BP. 180/30. Orthopnea. Edema of legs. Râles at both lung bases. Apex of the heart in the sixth interspace, 15 cm. to the left of the midsternal line. Rhythm irregular. Rate 100. Heart sounds were of poor quality. Harsh systolic and diastolic murmurs were heard over the aortic area. There was a long low-pitched diastolic murmur over the mitral area.

**LABORATORY DATA.** Blood Wassermann positive. Urine showed a cloud of albumin with many hyaline casts.

The electrocardiogram showed many ventricular premature beats and a left axis auricular fibrillation.

The patient died on the fifth hospital day.

**CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS.** A. Etiologic. Syphilis. B. Anatomic. Cardiac enlargement. Aortic regurgitation. C. Physiologic. Numerous premature ventricular contractions. D. Functional Classification: Class 4. Therapeutic Classification: Class E.

**AUTOPSY.** Both ventricles were dilated and hypertrophied. The aortic and mitral valves showed the presence of an old rheumatic endocarditis. The aorta showed very few healed syphilitic scars.

**Discussion.** In addition to the signs of congestive cardiac failure in this patient, there was evidence of heart disease of long standing: cardiac enlargement and the murmurs over the apex and the aortic area. A Corrigan

type of pulse was present, and the patient was found to have a positive Wassermann reaction. Over the region of the cardiac apex there was a low-pitched, rumbling diastolic murmur. This did not excite suspicion and was considered to be an Austin Flint murmur. Consequently the etiologic background was thought to be syphilis. Response to treatment was poor, which seemed to confirm the diagnosis, and the patient died on the fifth hospital day.

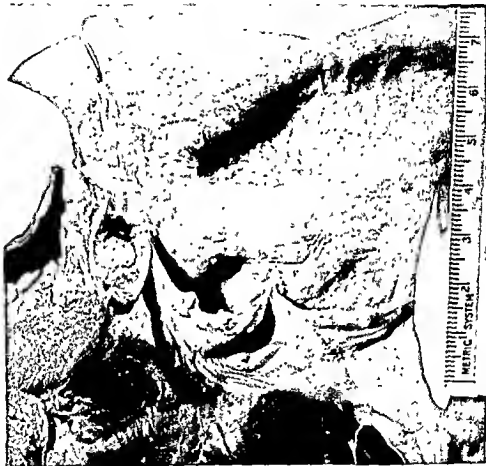


FIG. 94. Rheumatic involvement of the aortic valve. Healed syphilitic aortitis. (Autopsy No. 27,596 Philadelphia General Hospital.)

The main lesion found in this man's heart at autopsy was rheumatic (Fig. 94), although the pathologist found some slight evidence of syphilitic aortitis.

Reviewing this case in the light of the autopsy findings, we must realize that at times it may be impossible to ascertain the exact etiology of a cardiac lesion. After all the clues offered by clinical and laboratory studies

are fully investigated, considerable doubt may still exist. Aortic valve lesions, when they occur alone, cause most confusion (page 204). However, the systolic and diastolic murmurs over the aortic area, the typical rumbling diastolic murmur at the apex, the positive rheumatic history, and the duration of the dyspnea should make us consider rheumatic heart disease. The positive Wasserman, the aortic lesion, and the sudden death of the patient during the first episode of congestive failure suggested syphilis as the background before the autopsy.

Calcific aortic stenosis should also have been considered in this case. Evidence of calcification of the aortic valve on the roentgenogram (see Fig. 26) would have strengthened a rheumatic diagnosis. The presence of the systolic murmur over the aortic area, if accompanied by a thrill, is usually evidence in favor of rheumatic etiology, although occasionally aneurysmal dilatations may produce a thrill in this area.

In this patient evidence of syphilis in other parts of the body was entirely lacking; in fact, the Wassermann reaction alone seemed to sway clinical opinion toward syphilis.

The electrocardiogram was returned to us after the autopsy. In keeping with our impression of syphilitic heart disease, we believed the irregular rhythm was due to frequently recurring premature beats. However, the tracing showed the presence of auricular fibrillation, an arrhythmia much more likely to complicate the course of rheumatic heart disease than luetic.

Occasionally cases, in which an etiologic diagnosis of the aortic lesion cannot be made, develop fever and other evidences of subacute bacterial endocarditis. However, while pointing to a rheumatic background in most cases, this complication is possible in congenital, luetic or rheumatic types; in fact, it should always be kept in mind when discussing the cause of death of any cardiac patient. Maher and Plece<sup>232</sup> have reported 12 instances from a series of 5000 cases in which syphilitic heart disease was complicated by the appearance of thyrotoxicosis. This added burden increases the incidence of auricular fibrillation and congestive failure. Successful surgical treatment of the thyrotoxicosis is usually followed by considerable clinical improvement. The mortality following subtotal thyroidectomy was surprisingly low in the series observed by Maher and Plece.

A final point of importance in arriving at the correct etiologic diagnosis so essential before proper treatment can be begun, is the possibility of rheumatic and syphilitic infections co-existing in the same heart. Cases of this type illustrated by the patient now under discussion are by no means rare.

The treatment of this patient was first directed toward the cardiac failure. If this had cleared, the importance of establishing the correct etiologic background for the heart lesion at once becomes evident. The treatment of the syphilis would then have proceeded cautiously with the cardiovascular system in mind, followed by frequent examinations to ascertain the effect on the cardiac lesion.

SYPHILITIC AORTIC ANEURYSM OF TRANSVERSE ARCH (ANEURYSM OF SYMPTOMS)—STEADY DOWN HILL COURSE WITH COUGH AND DYSPHAGIA—AUTOPSY

Case 31. R. A., an unemployed colored male of 53, was admitted to the Philadelphia General Hospital on 5/20/29 complaining of pain in the chest and shortness of breath.



FIG. 95. Large aneurysmal sac arising from ascending aortic arch. Note the small size of the heart compared to that of the aneurysm. (Autopsy No. 20,820. Philadelphia General Hospital.)

HISTORY. Chronic cough for six years. Increasing hoarseness and dyspnea, followed by dysphagia and a loss of weight of 40 pounds, appeared during the year before admission.

**PHYSICAL EXAMINATION.** Marked dyspnea, B.P. 110/80, on the right and 0/0 on the left. Limited expansion of the left side of the chest. Fullness over the left upper chest. The breath sounds were distant over this area and exaggerated over the right chest. There were râles at both lung bases. There was a systolic murmur over the cardiac apex. No cardiac enlargement. A<sub>2</sub> greater than P<sub>2</sub>.

**LABORATORY DATA.** Wassermann positive. The roentgenogram showed a large aortic aneurysm. The trachea was displaced to the right.

Electrocardiogram normal.

Urine showed a trace of albumin.

**CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS.** A. Etiologic: Syphilis. B. Anatomic: Large aortic aneurysm. C. Physiologic: Normal sinus rhythm. D. Functional Classification: Class 4.

The patient died suddenly on the 12th hospital day.

**AUTOPSY.** The heart was small compared to the size of the aneurysmal sac (Fig. 93). About one inch above the aortic valve the aorta was seen to expand into a large aneurysmal sac, measuring 15 X 16 X 10 cm. and involving the remainder of the ascending and all of the transverse arches. The sac was filled with thrombus and was attached to the apex of the left lung, which was pushed forward and compressed. There was likewise compression and erosion of the esophagus with a large ulcer. The pulmonary artery where it divides and passes into the lungs showed constriction resulting from the aneurysm.

**Discussion.** The complaints of dyspnea, cough, and dysphagia focused attention at once on the mediastinum in this case and suggested aneurysm. The clinical examination and the roentgen study quickly confirmed the diagnosis.

Patients with aneurysm in this location lose considerable weight (aneurysmal cachexia). This may be a result of the continued pain which causes a loss of sleep. In the case under discussion, the dysphagia appeared to be an additional and perhaps a more direct cause of the weight loss. Compression of the lung and trachea with atelectasis contributed to the dyspnea, at the same time producing cough and hoarseness.

The autopsy showed nothing to explain the patient's sudden death. However, some notice must be taken of the fact that the pulmonary artery was markedly compressed by the aneurysmal sac. Encroachment in this area, if long continued, can in itself lead to cardiac failure through the production of cor pulmonale (page 426). Had this patient survived for a longer period, clinical evidence of this pressure in the lesser circulation would have appeared in the form of cyanosis, engorged pulsating jugulars, increasing dyspnea, enlarged liver, and the signs that we interpret as evidence of right-sided heart failure. Occasionally the dilated aorta may rupture into the pulmonary artery with the production of an arteriovenous aneurysm. A loud, prolonged murmur accompanied by a thrill then appears over the pulmonary area, dyspnea increases, and hemoptysis may occur. This accident does not cause immediate death; in fact, as we have seen in Case 6, the patient may live long enough to develop secondary changes in the wall of the pulmonary artery.

The patient under discussion received a liquid diet and sedatives in sufficient quantities to relieve the cough and dyspnea. The heart was not enlarged, and aside from the dyspnea and slight cyanosis which could not

be considered entirely cardiac in origin, there were no signs of cardiac failure. Digitalis was not prescribed.

Bismuth salicylate injections (page 214) and iodides by mouth were given for the effect they might have in reducing the pain by their specific action, but were unsuccessful.

#### SYPHILITIC AORTITIS AND ANEURYSM—EXCELLENT RESPONSE TO THERAPY\*

**Case 32.** E. H., a well-nourished white woman of 51, consulted her physician in January, 1929 because of severe pain in the left shoulder, chest and upper arm. Her husband died a month previously of a ruptured aortic aneurysm.

**PHYSICAL EXAMINATION.** B.P. 142/90. There was an increase in the area of supra-cardiac dulness noted and a marked accentuation of the aortic second sound.

**PAST HISTORY.** Her blood Wassermann was positive in 1919, at which time appropriate therapy was begun but discontinued because of a reaction, the exact nature of which was not clear. No treatment was received between 1919 and 1929.

The roentgen examination (1929) (Fig. 96A) showed dilatation and increase in expansile pulsation of the first portion of the arch of the aorta. The greatest width of the aortic shadow was 8.5 cm.

**CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS.** A. Etiologic Syphilis B Anatomic Aortitis. Early aneurysm of the ascending arch. C. Physiologic Normal sinus rhythm D Functional Classification Class 2.

**SUBSEQUENT COURSE.** Weekly injections of 50 milligrams of bismuth salicylate in oil were given intramuscularly and increased until the patient was receiving 100 milligrams weekly.

By the end of the fifth week of this treatment, the chest pain had entirely disappeared. The full course was completed.

The roentgen examination was repeated in three months and showed a definite decrease in the size of the aorta (Fig. 96B).

At the end of the first year of bismuth therapy, the patient felt so well that she discontinued treatment again against the advice of her physician.

In August, 1932, two years later, she reappeared complaining of slight pain in the left chest. An orthodiagram at this time showed little change. The electrocardiogram (Fig. 96C) showed only a left axis deviation.

Bismuth therapy was again started and a full course given with appropriate rest periods over the next three years.

Follow-up examination in 1940 showed little change. The patient remained free of symptoms. She had lived a normal life in every respect since the diagnosis was made in 1929.

**Discussion.** Chest pain in a patient of this age who has a positive Wassermann reaction and roentgenographic evidence of aortic involvement, disqualifies her for neoarsphenamine unless preceded by a long preparatory period. Many younger patients might show rapid improvement in their lesion following administration of neoarsphenamine, but the physician might later regret this therapeutic triumph in the presence of a failing heart.

The relief of pain in older patients showing this degree of aortic involvement is usually accomplished by persistent antisypilitic treatment combined with the proper amount of rest. Where larger aneurysms are present and are accessible, the procedure of wiring and electrolysis (page 229) proves helpful in relieving the pain. The various procedures recommended

\* Courtesy of Dr. Carroll S. Wright.

to block the nerves by paravertebral injection (page 256) are occasionally useful in the treatment of severe pain that attends aneurysmal growth.

A

B



C

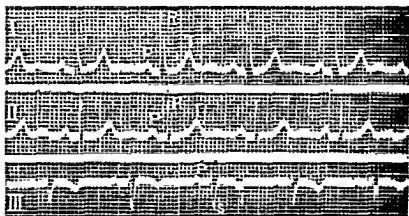


FIG 96. A. Roentgen examination at beginning of treatment (1929). Note increase in size first portion of aortic arch. B. Three months later. Note decrease in size of the aorta.

C. The electrocardiogram (1932) showed a left axis deviation. The other features likewise normal for patient of this age. Note the change in voltage of QRSs caused by respiratory influence.

The relief of pain when specific treatment was begun in this patient was evidence in favor of the diagnosis of syphilis. Iodides in large doses are useful in early aneurysm. An initial dose of 0.3 to 0.6 Gm. (5 to 10 grains) three times daily was prescribed in this case and gradually raised to 4.0 Gm. (60 grains) three times daily.

The absence of cardiac enlargement and aortic insufficiency in this case when treatment was begun contributed in no small measure to the good result. The aneurysm was recognized early, and the patient, aside from occasional lapses in treatment, was able to follow an ideal regime. She never had to work for her living; consequently occupational stress and strain, which are factors of importance in the production of large aneurysms in the male, were entirely avoided. It is doubtful if the same treatment in the case of an aortic lesion of similar extent and duration in a negro laborer would have the same happy result. This is one reason, I believe, why various statistical studies differ with regard to efficacy of treatment at this stage of the disease.

#### CARDIOVASCULAR SYPHILIS—ANEURYSM OF ASCENDING AORTA—SURVIVAL FOR THREE YEARS AFTER WIRING

Case 33. J. G., a negro laborer of 56, was admitted to the Philadelphia General Hospital, complaining of shortness of breath and chest pain.

**HISTORY.** Marked dyspnea and pitting edema were present on admission. Dysphagia and chest pain of intermittent character present for six months.

**PHYSICAL EXAMINATION.** B.P. 150/60. Obese, deaf, colored male. Signs of old hemiplegia. There was a large, pulsating prominence the size of a lemon to the right of the sternum extending from the second rib to the fourth intercostal space (Fig. 97A). There were systolic and diastolic murmurs over the base of the heart. A tracheal tug was present. The liver was 4 cm. below the costal margin.

**LABORATORY DATA.** Wassermann reaction negative.

Electrocardiogram: left axis deviation. Occasional premature beat of ventricular origin.

Roentgenogram: large aortic aneurysm.

**COURSE.** The aneurysm was wired twice with 15 feet of gold wire at intervals of two years. The patient died suddenly from rupture of the aneurysm through the anterior chest wall.

**AUTOPSY** (Fig. 97B). The heart was enlarged with left ventricular hypertrophy. The ascending aorta and the arch were dilated. There was a large aneurysmal sac just anterior to the origin of the innominate artery, which had eroded the second, third, and fourth costal cartilages and the right border of the sternum. The sac was filled with organized thrombus and firm clot. Coils of wire were recovered from the center. In the descending aorta a second aneurysm was found just beginning to erode the body of the fourth thoracic vertebra. The remainder of the aorta showed both luetic and atheromatous changes.

#### TREATMENT OF ANEURYSMS OF THE THORACIC AORTA

**Discussion** (Dr. Henry D. Jump\*). The great majority of aortic aneurysms are due to syphilis. The percentage will be found to vary in accordance with the observer and the consideration given to the history of infection, the character of previous treatment, the accuracy of the blood and spinal fluid examinations, and the pathologic findings. It may be accepted as a general rule that the farther from the heart aneurysms occur, the lower will be the percentage that are caused by syphilis.

From the nature of things, the treatment of aneurysms is not very satisfactory, and the most that we may expect to accomplish is palliation of

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B



FIG. 97. A. Large aneurysmal sac presenting on anterior chest wall.

B. Large aortic aneurysm. Note aortic dilatation and the presence of both atheromatous and syphilitic changes. (Autopsy No. 17,557. Philadelphia General Hospital.)

symptoms and a slight prolongation of life. The vessel is usually badly diseased, and another part may be expected to break down at any time. Often multiple aneurysms are present.

In the postmortem room, saccular aneurysms are usually found partly filled with laminated clot. The most of these have small orifices which cause slowing of blood current and favor coagulation. Blackmore and King<sup>30</sup> found six in a series of 42 postmortem specimens of saccular aneurysms to be filled completely with clot; of 19 fusiform aneurysms, seven showed concentric clotting which had narrowed their lumen to a diameter equal to, or less than, that of the aorta. With such evidence at hand of Nature's way of spontaneously eliminating these dangerous vascular dilatations, we are prompted to devise methods that may be expected to aid her and, if possible, speed the process.

The following measures have been advanced from time to time: the introduction of needles into the aneurysmal sacs, the application of a galvanic current to the outside of the aneurysms, the placing around the vessel of constricting bands to slow the blood current, a dry diet with prolonged rest, the use of antisyphilitic drugs, the introduction of wire and other substances, and the anastomosis of the carotid artery and internal jugular vein. Only the last four have survived and are occasionally useful in the modern treatment of properly selected cases.

Inasmuch as early treatment produces far better results, diagnosis of aneurysms in their incipiency is much to be desired. This is not easy, for often a positive history of syphilitic infection is not obtainable, there are no positive serum reactions, and there may be no symptoms. On the other hand, routine physical examination may reveal a suspicious area of supra-cardiac dulness, which the roentgen examination shows to be caused by a dilatation in the region of the aorta. Under the fluoroscope, this mass may be seen to pulsate, or if the aneurysm contains much clot, or is firmly tied down by an associated periaortitis or mediastinitis of syphilitic nature, pulsations may be absent. The administration of specific remedies may ultimately cause resolution of these tissues and permit pulsations to be observed.

As the lesion develops, other signs and symptoms occur: bruit, pressure and pain, diastolic shock, pulsation in the interspaces, enlargement of superficial vessels of the chest, hoarseness, cough, tracheal tug, pulsus differens, etc.

The abdominal aortic aneurysm is always hard to detect, even when large. It usually lies high in the abdomen, and percussion dulness may not be elicited in the back, because of the overlying liver. In this region, pulsation is very deceptive; for often a pulsating aorta in a thin individual may simulate the expansile pulsation of an aneurysm. However, if the hands can grasp the upper and lower poles of the sac, an expansile pulsation will be detected and this common error avoided. A roentgen study may likewise be of considerable help. Erosion of the vertebrae may be present, and if the

mural clot has become calcified, this will outline the periphery quite clearly. Under the fluoroscope, expansile pulsations may be seen.

**DIET AND REST.** This regime of treatment was offered by Valsalva, Bellingham, and Tufnell of Dublin in turn. The name of the last investigator is still attached to the method. Complete physical and mental rest were planned in association with the very low diet. The object was to concentrate the blood, slow the heart rate, and reduce the arterial pressure, in the hope that coagulation within the sac might be favored (Chapter 21).

The Tufnell diet is made up as follows:

*Breakfast* two ounces of milk, two ounces of bread with a little butter,

*Dinner* three ounces of meat without salt and four ounces of milk. For a portion of the milk, one or two ounces of claret may be substituted.

*Supper* the same as breakfast.

This severe program few patients can be induced to accept today, since the anemia and weakness which follow its prolonged use add little to the patient's comfort. The addition of considerable protein and a little more liquids will make it more acceptable, and should not interfere with its purpose. After all, it is not unlikely that under this regime there is an increase in the mural clot which reinforces the wall of the sac. Iodide of potassium was also given with this program to "promote coagulation."

**ANTISYPHILITIC DRUGS.** The treatment of syphilitic cardiovascular disease in general and the modifications called for in aneurysm have been discussed (page 219). A few important points, however, will be repeated here for emphasis.

Reactions to treatment should be avoided. These, "therapeutic shock" (Jarisch-Herxheimer reaction), and "therapeutic paradox" (Wile), occur most frequently after the use of arsenicals. Reactions may usually be avoided by beginning treatment with iodide and bismuth and continuing for 10 to 12 weeks. Arsphenamine should never be used. Neoarsphenamine has a place in the treatment of cardiovascular syphilis only after preliminary treatment with iodide and bismuth. The dose of neoarsphenamine should be initially 0.025 or 0.05 Gm., with a gradual increase weekly to a maximum of 0.3 Gm.

In about 50 per cent of aneurysms this treatment has been followed by a relief of symptoms and probably a prolongation of life. Arsenic affords a more certain relief from pain than iodide and the heavy metal. This coincides with the observations of Moore et al.<sup>273</sup> and Padget and Moore.<sup>291</sup> Moore and his co-workers reported a mortality of 90 per cent among patients receiving little or no treatment and 40 per cent among those who had adequate treatment. There was an average duration of life from the onset of symptoms of 19 months among the former and of 75 months among the latter. The number of cases observed, however, was small. Stokes<sup>252</sup> reports one case of aneurysm where roentgen-ray examination showed only a dilatation of the aorta three years after continued treatment.

In cardiovascular syphilis, the serology is no guide to the efficacy of the treatment. In only about 50 per cent of the cases is the reaction reversed.

Heart failure occurs infrequently in aneurysm. It may appear as a terminal event; approximately 10 to 12 per cent die in this manner, in contrast to 35 to 40 per cent who die of rupture of the aneurysmal sac. When congestive failure occurs, specific treatment should be discontinued, and the cardiac symptoms treated in the usual manner with rest, digitalization, and mercurial diuretics. However, the chances of improvement when congestive failure becomes established, are small.

**WIRING OF AORTIC ANEURYSMS.** The introduction of wire and the passage through it of a galvanic current for the purpose of coagulating the blood offer a measure of relief in selected cases of sacculated aneurysm. In 1864, Moore suggested the introduction of filiform material into an aneurysm to produce clotting, and he accomplished it in one case. This pioneer investigator also stated that if wiring is to be done, no artery should open from the aneurysm for "if wire is exposed in a violent current of blood, fibrinous clots will certainly break off from it and plug distant arteries." He thus expressed the fundamental fact that only saccular aneurysms are susceptible to treatment by wiring.

The next step was taken in 1879 by Corradi of Italy, who used galvanic current through the wire he had introduced into a thoracic aneurysm. There was marked relief for about three months. The technic of Moore and Corradi has been the most acceptable and has been employed since its introduction. Hare used it and reported a marked benefit in all of his cases, although some had been in desperate condition previous to wiring. Rosenstirn<sup>323</sup> reported a case in whom the improvement was remarkable. A 25-year-old patient had an aneurysm of the ascending arch which protruded on the chest. Severe pain required heavy doses of opiates, while oxygen was given for frequent spells of suffocation. A few days after wiring the pain began to improve; in two weeks dyspnea was relieved, and in six weeks the pulsating tumor subsided. Later he was reported to be "in most excellent health to undergo any ordinary exercise." He lived for 11 years and eight months following the introduction of the wire. Rarely do such remarkable results occur, but in the cases I have wired, improvement in symptoms has always been observed.

There were no changes in Hare's technic until Millar,<sup>370</sup> experimenting with cats, inserted various kinds of wire into the aorta and found that zinc caused a better coagulation of the blood than any other metal, including gold and platinum. He did not employ the galvanic current.

Blackmore and King<sup>30</sup> devised an elaborate apparatus to introduce and coil a double strand of wire in the aneurysmal sac. Their objects were to insert enough wire to slow the blood current and to heat this by an electric current to the point where the blood protein coagulates. The coagulum that forms on the wire is difficult to scrape off. This method was used in 11 cases with considerable success.

**INDICATIONS FOR WIRING.** Wiring is a procedure to be considered in saccular aneurysms only. The object is to produce a clot in the aneurysm which will be attached to the wire and the wall and completely fill the sac. If applied to fusiform aneurysms, coagula, which form on the coils of the wire, may be swept off as emboli and lodge in distant vessels. Moore pointed out this danger, but in spite of his warning, several fusiform aneurysms wired by the Moore-Corradi method have been reported. In each case emboli have formed and death has followed. Blackmore and King have been able to use their method in the fusiform type of aneurysm with no untoward results.

It was formerly stated that a thoracic aneurysm must protrude on the surface in order that a wire might be introduced with certainty into the sac. However, using a long needle guided by the fluoroscope, it should be possible to reach those a slight distance below the surface. In smaller aneurysms, the results should be better, for in these the aorta is less diseased than in the ones of larger size. Even when blood oozes from the aneurysm that protrudes on the surface, it may be successfully wired and external rupture delayed.

The abdominal aneurysm must be exposed by celiotomy, since few of them reach the surface. I feel that the only indication for wiring the abdominal aneurysm is the great pain caused by their pressure on contiguous structures.

**CONTRAINDICATIONS TO WIRING.** When attacks of paroxysmal cardiac dyspnea are present, the cases are almost hopeless, and the operation of wiring will not postpone death. Hare was of the opinion that the presence of more than one aneurysm was a contraindication. The filling of one by a clot will deflect the blood current in such a manner as to increase the pressure in the other, in which event rupture is more apt to occur. For the same reason, Hare believed that wiring should not be done in a saccular aneurysm which is distal to a fusiform.

The equipment needed for wiring consists of:

- Solution of iodine, 3.5 per cent
- Alcohol
- Hypodermic syringe and needles.
- Hollow needle of about 20-gauge, insulated with porcelain, shellac or varnish except 5 mm ( $\frac{1}{4}$  inch) of the tip.
- Wire of gold alloy (gold 60 per cent, silver 30 per cent, platinum 10 per cent—gauge 14)
- Galvanic instrument with rheostat and milli-ammeter, which is connected with house current or to six or eight dry cells.
- Oval metal pad 20 x 30 cm (8 x 10 inches) covered with cotton pad.
- Small scalpel.
- Rubber gloves.
- Gauze dressings, sponges, applicators, collodion.

The procedure is carried out under strict antiseptic precautions. The wire is wound upon a spool and sterilized by heat. For an aneurysm 7 cm. (3 inches) in diameter (on the roentgen plate), two to three meters (7 to 10 feet) will suffice. For an aneurysm 10

to 13 cm. (+ 10 5 inches) in diameter, three to four meters (10 to 15 feet) will be needed.

The needle is also sterilized by heat if it is insulated with porcelain. If covered with a heavy coat of varnish or shellac, boiling will soften this but it will harden when cooled. Soaking in pure grain alcohol will sterilize it, but part of the insulation will go into solution.

The operator and his assistant should wear rubber gloves, and if the floor is not dry, rubber-soled shoes.

After sterilizing the skin overlying the aneurysm with iodine and alcohol, it is anesthetized with 1 per cent procaine solution, and a small incision is made through the skin 1 to 2 cm away from the thinnest part of the aneurysmal wall. The needle, after being dipped into sterile water to lubricate it, is quickly thrust through the incision into the aneurysm in a direction away from the opening of the sac. *Blood will spurt intermittently from it immediately after the sac is entered. Until this occurs, the wire must not be introduced.* If blood does not appear and the needle is not occluded, a longer needle may be needed in order to penetrate the clot in the margin of the aneurysm. Puncture at another point may be useful in reaching the interior of the sac. Feed the gold wire slowly into the sac, unwinding it carefully from the spool to prevent linking. The positive pole of the battery is next attached to the wire and the negative to the pad which has been previously moistened and put under the patient's back or buttocks or on the abdomen. Turn on the galvanic current slowly, beginning at 5 milliamperes, and increase it 5 milliamperes every minute until 45 to 50 milliamperes are being given. Continue this amount for 10 minutes, and then gradually withdraw the current by reducing 5 milliamperes every minute. Loosen the needle from the clot gradually and gently by turning, and then slowly withdraw it, using counter pressure on the sac. Cut the wire close to the skin and push the end beneath it. Dress the puncture with collodion or sterile pad of gauze. There is rarely any leakage. Following wiring, the patient should be kept in bed for a period of at least two weeks, to encourage consolidation of the clot.

The results that may follow wiring of an aneurysm are:

1. Pain lessens or disappears soon after the current is turned off.
2. Other pressure symptoms are relieved when the size of the aneurysm decreases.
3. The size of the aneurysm decreases when the clot consolidates and becomes organized.
4. Rupture of the aneurysm is delayed or prevented in many cases, and the patient's life prolonged.

The prognosis varies with each case and depends entirely on the condition of the aorta. No deaths are known which can be attributed to the procedure of wiring.

\* It is important that the patient should not have access to the end of the gold wire. This point was emphasized at a Philadelphia General Hospital autopsy. During the period when the supply of the metal was limited, Dr. Jump sought to recover his wire from the inside of an aneurysmal sac. When a careful search of the large, firmly adherent clot, as well as adjacent regions, failed to show any trace of the strand that had been fed in so generously and trustingly, the chemists were hurriedly called in consultation. When the mystery deepened, the physiologists were summoned. However, the wire had not been absorbed. The best sleuth from the Social Service Department returned the next day and upset all the hasty calculations. Her investigations revealed that the patient had found the end of the wire, learned its composition, and paid it out inch by inch during frequent visits to a local tap room.

In a few cases reported in literature, the wire has escaped from the sac and entered the aorta. In one abdominal aneurysm on which I operated, the wire traveled upward until it reached the aortic orifice (Fig. 98A and B). However, the patient's pain, which had been very severe, was much relieved, and the wandering strand of wire produced no untoward effects so far as we were able to determine. The patient died 10 weeks later, and we found at postmortem a rupture of the sac in the lower pole, which contained no clot. The rest of the sac was well filled with a firm clot enmeshed in the wire. There was no clot on the wire in the aorta, and on close inspection no injury to the vessel was apparent.

In recent years, carotid-jugular anastomosis has been the procedure of choice in the surgical treatment of aneurysm at the Philadelphia General

A

B



FIG. 98. A. Roentgen film showing coil of wire in aneurysmal sac. B. Same patient, lateral view. Note coil of wire in aorta as far as aortic valve.

Hospital. Since this procedure will be discussed in detail after the next case presentation, my remarks concerning it will be few. In 1930 McCarthy<sup>212</sup> reported ten cases and showed that the operation greatly relieves pain, reduces the size of the aneurysm and postpones rupture. In two of his cases where pressure symptoms recurred after primary relief, I have resorted to wiring, and in both, symptoms were again relieved. In one patient a considerable reduction in the size of the aneurysm followed the wiring. This major operation upon blood vessels that are the seat of advanced syphilitic disease in patients who are quite ill is less attractive to me than wiring. The results are approximately the same following each procedure.

## CARDIOVASCULAR SYPHILIS—ANEURYSM OF AORTA—SUCCESSFUL CAROTID-JUGULAR ANASTOMOSIS

Case 34. Mrs. M. S., age 59, was admitted to the Memorial Hospital on 1/5/39, complaining of "smothering" spells, blood spitting, pain in the chest, and a persistent cough.

**HISTORY.** The patient was in good health until August, 1938, when she had an attack of severe dyspnea followed by hemoptysis. These symptoms subsided after rest in bed. She had another attack in December, 1938. About one week later she awoke at three o'clock in the morning with a smothering feeling, dyspnea, and severe chest pain. A hypodermic of morphine was required. Following this seizure, the patient was forced to remain in bed until she was admitted to the hospital. Past history negative. One child living and well. No miscarriages.

**PHYSICAL EXAMINATION** revealed a well-nourished elderly female propped up in bed, coughing frequently and raising small quantities of blood-streaked sputum.

The left pupil was smaller than the right and did not react to light. The carotid pulsation on the right side was quite noticeable. No tracheal tug. The chest was asymmetrical, there was some bulging of the sternum at the second rib. There was considerable widening of the area of supracardiac dullness.

The heart was enlarged to the left. The sounds were of poor quality, the rhythm regular. There was a systolic murmur at the cardiac apex, another loud rough systolic murmur over the entire area of aortic dullness. The blood pressure was 148/80.

**LABORATORY DATA.** Urinalysis revealed nothing abnormal. Blood count RBC, 4,040,000; W.B.C., 6,650; hemoglobin, 75 per cent (Sahli); N. 50, M 7, E 1, B.U.N. 9 mg. per 100 cc. of blood. Glucose 100 mg. The Wassermann reaction was four plus.

Röntgen examination of the chest showed a heart enlarged in all diameters. There was a large fusiform dilatation of the aortic arch, mainly in its transverse and descending portions. No erosion of the spine was evident in the lateral view.

**CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS.** A. Etiologic Syphilis, Arteriosclerosis B. Anatomic Cardiac enlargement. Relative mitral insufficiency Syphilitic aortitis Aneurysm C. Physiologic Normal sinus rhythm. D Functional Classification Class 3 Therapeutic Classification Class E.

**COURSE.** Following a period of two weeks of bed rest, during which time the patient was digitalized and given mercurial diuretics as required, on 1/16/39, a left carotid-jugular anastomosis was performed. Her convalescence was uneventful. Since operation there has been no hemoptysis, dyspnea or pain.

On 11/20/39 nearly a year later, the patient reports no cough, no pain, and a marked increase in exercise tolerance. BP 140/90. Bismuth and iodides were given during this period.

**Discussion.** (Dr. James Lehman). In 1925 Babcock<sup>18</sup> described an operation for the relief of aneurysm of the arch of the aorta, which has proved beneficial in many cases. Heretofore, all operations suggested or tried have been aimed at slowing or abolishing the flow of blood through the aneurysmal sac. Carotid-jugular anastomosis directs the arterial blood stream into the vein, thus eliminating the peripheral bed of capillaries, increasing the velocity of blood in the aneurysm, and reducing the intra-vascular tension.

It is a well-known principle of hydrodynamics that a liquid moving through a tube under pressure exerts pressure against the wall of the tube inversely as the velocity through the tube. As the lumen of the tube is constricted, the velocity increases, and the lateral pressure decreases. Con-



versely, as the lumen of the tube is increased, the velocity decreases, and the lateral pressure becomes greater. It is the retardation of the flow of liquids through a tube that causes rupture, not the high velocity. Consequently, when the aorta dilates to form an aneurysm, the blood current is slowed, and the wall of the aneurysm is subjected to much greater pressure than is the artery above or below this dilatation. If it is possible to increase the velocity of the blood in the aorta and the aneurysm, we should be able to decrease the lateral pressure on the wall of the sac, sufficiently to prevent rupture.

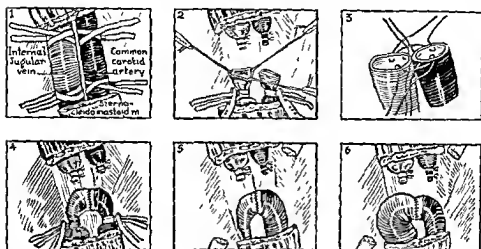


FIG. 99. The steps in carotid-jugular anastomosis.

In 1930, McCarthy<sup>242</sup> reported ten cases operated upon by the Babcock method with gratifying results. Since that time he has operated upon additional cases and states\* that he has never observed rupture of an aneurysm following a carotid-jugular anastomosis.

The operation can be performed under local, or light gas anesthesia. The sternocleidomastoid muscle is divided transversely and the carotid sheath exposed. Care should be taken not to injure the vagus nerve. Umbilical tapes are placed above and below the point of anastomosis (Fig. 99). The artery and vein are then divided and an end-to-end anastomosis performed, suturing intima to intima. A second layer of reinforcing sutures should be placed to make the anastomosis secure. The tapes are slowly removed, and the wound closed in the usual manner.

#### LARGE ANEURYSM OF TRANSVERSE AND DESCENDING AORTIC ARCHES— ONSET WITH BACHACHE AND PAIN IN LEFT ARM—ARTERIOVENOUS ANASTOMOSIS UNSUCCESSFUL—AUTOPSY

Case 35. J. G., a colored laborer of 45, was admitted to the Philadelphia General Hospital complaining of pain in the left side of the chest and in the back of a year's duration.

\* Personal communication.

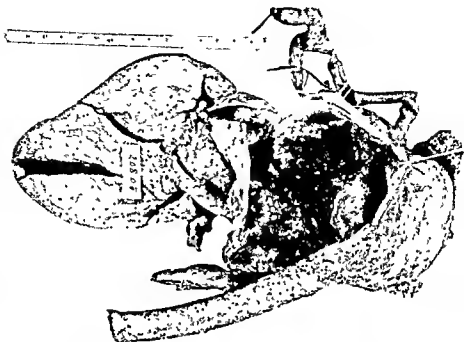


FIG. 100

FIG. 100. Large aneurysmal sac involving the transverse and the descending portions of the aortic arch. (Autopsy No. 20,808. Philadelphia General Hospital.)

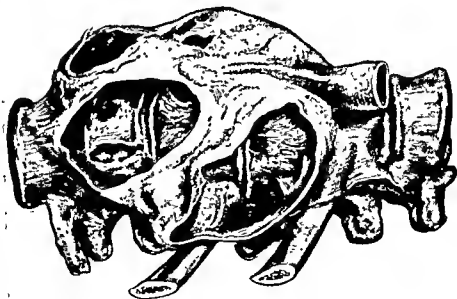


FIG. 101

FIG. 101. Aneurysm of the descending thoracic aorta. Note the erosion of the vertebrae with preservation of the intervertebral discs.

**HISTORY.** Patient unable to work for the past four months. The pain started over the area of the left scapula and radiated to the left arm. It was made worse by moving in bed and was relieved by lying on the right side. Backache constant. A loss of 20 pounds in six months was reported. Untreated chancre 15 years before admission.

**PHYSICAL EXAMINATION.** Emaciated, colored male of 45. B.P. 128/90 on the right and 60/0 on the left. The radial pulse was weak on the left and full on the right side. The pupils were small and fixed and did not respond to light. The heart was not enlarged. The sounds were of fair quality and a systolic thrill and systolic murmur were heard over the aortic area. A2 was accentuated.

**LABORATORY DATA.** Electrocardiogram: left axis deviation.

Fluoroscopic examination: dilatation of the aorta involving the transverse arch with slight dilatation of the ascending portion.

**CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS.** A. Etiologic: Syphilis. B. Anatomic: Aneurysm, ascending and transverse arches. C. Physiologic: Normal sinus rhythm. D. Functional Classification: Class 4. Therapeutic Classification: Class E.

**COURSE.** Anastomosis of the left carotid and jugular vein was performed. Fourteen hours later the patient developed a right-sided hemiplegia and died.

**AUTOPY.** The aneurysm involved the entire transverse and descending portions of the aortic arch (Fig. 100). The bodies of the second, third, and fourth vertebrae were eroded (Fig. 101). The intervertebral discs were preserved. The spinal cord was exposed. The orifice of the left subclavian was covered by extension of a large clot in the sac. The heart was normal.

**Discussion.** Lucke and Rea<sup>239</sup> in a study of 249 cases of aneurysm found erosion of the vertebrae in 53 and spinal cord compression in one. In a series of 100 cases reported by Brindley and Schwab,<sup>42</sup> only one aneurysm was found to involve the spinal cord, although a number eroded the vertebrae to some extent. Shimkin<sup>328</sup> has lately emphasized the fact that compression of the spinal cord is a rare complication of syphilitic aortic aneurysm. In the patient whose history appears above, in spite of the marked erosion of the vertebral bodies, no signs of spinal cord compression were elicited.

The duration of life in these cases does not usually exceed two years from the date of the onset of symptoms, although occasional instances of exceptionally long survival appear in literature. Considering the severity of the lesion and the pain that invariably attends the erosion, it is surprising how long these patients continue to work before applying for treatment. This patient, at the onset of his difficulty, took a great deal of medicine for "neuritis." Failing to gain relief, he went to a chiropractor, who gave him a series of "treatments." When these made him worse, he went to bed, where he obtained the most relief. He had been in bed for four months without medical care when he was removed to the hospital. Morphine in large doses was then required to control the pain.

At the end of the first week, an arteriovenous anastomosis of the left carotid artery and jugular vein was done under local anesthesia. Pain ceased following the operation, but 14 hours later the patient developed a right-sided hemiplegia and died.

## ANGINA PECTORIS

In medicine there are instances where the most profound human wisdom is unable to anticipate the course or predict the outcome.—  
CORVISART (1808).

The term "angina pectoris" was first used by William Heberden in 1768 in referring to the symptom of chest pain of the type that was later (1788) shown by Edward Jenner to be associated with disease of the coronary arteries. It is important to realize at the start that angina pectoris, as its name implies, is merely a symptom, and not a separate disease entity. While many terms exist to confuse the picture (stenocardia, precordial pain, anginal pain, retrosternal pain), they all refer to a paroxysmal sense of constriction or pain of short duration in the upper chest that is produced by any factor increasing the cardiac burden and relieved by nitroglycerine or rest. When we use vague terms like anginoid pain or pseudo-angina, we are only hiding our ignorance, for these create a feeling of false security that hinders proper treatment.

Consequently, after a careful study of the patient, we should form an opinion as to whether or not the pain in question is cardiac in origin. Many times this opinion will have to be based entirely on the patient's story, for the rest of the examination may be negative. The sensation in the chest is described in various ways by different groups of patients. Some refer to it as a constriction; others call it a rawness or burning. Whatever sensation is complained of, inquiry should be made as to its nature following exertion. The patient soon learns that the quickest relief comes with rest and consequently remains motionless during subsequent attacks. It is not necessary to elicit a history of radiation of the pain to the shoulder or arm, before a diagnosis of angina can be made, for often there is no radiation, the sensation being confined to the upper sternum. In other cases there may be a typical radiation to the arms, usually the left, the side of the neck, the jaw, face, and in rare instances the back. If the pain is intense, it may be felt in both arms, although the left arm alone is more frequently affected. The pain usually descends on the ulnar side of the arm and hand (Fig. 102) and is followed by a feeling of numbness in this same region. Occasional reference to the abdomen may cause difficulty in diagnosis (page 478).

While angina is commonly induced by exertion, it may follow excitement, anger, heavy meals, sudden exposure to cold, or overindulgence in tobacco or coffee. The presence of one or more of these precipitating factors

may at any time be responsible for the increase in the number and severity of the seizures.

Attacks of angina follow no set rule. The first attack may prove fatal, or the issue may be deferred many years. The pain may last a few seconds to a few minutes, and in some patients may not cause a great deal of restriction in ordinary activities. Angina may vary from a slight ache or constriction of the chest to a pain of great intensity, depending on the sensitivity of the nervous system of the sufferer. Some individuals experi-

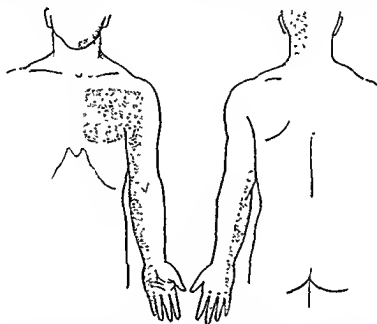


FIG. 102. The shaded areas in the diagram indicate the usual distribution of the pain during an attack of angina pectoris. (Redrawn from *Diseases of the Heart*, Sir James Mackenzie, London, Oxford Univ. Press, 1913.)

ence severe pain on the slightest provocation, while in others the symptoms may be mild, less easily produced, and readily controlled. However, the possibility of sudden death during an attack should be borne in mind in all patients once the diagnosis is established. Some ambulatory patients report many slight attacks each day and consume large quantities of nitroglycerine in their relief; others have fewer seizures. There may, in fact, be long intervals of freedom from the symptom, but recurrence is the general rule. In rare cases angina disappears entirely (page 276). It is also possible for coronary disease to progress to an advanced stage without the appearance of angina on any occasion; in fact the majority of patients with coronary artery disease do not have angina.

When the nature of the chest pain is evident, the prognosis occasionally may be estimated by careful study of the patient at subsequent visits. If

the anginal pain comes on more frequently and is induced by less exertion. we can infer that increase in the degree of coronary sclerosis has probably occurred, in which event the outlook is more serious. Eventually, attacks may be induced by the slightest stimulus, even when the patient is resting. Unusually severe pain of the type indicating occlusion of a branch of the coronary tree may replace the anginal pain in these patients at any time.

## INCIDENCE

**Sex.** Angina is much more apt to occur in men than in women, a fact that is constantly observed in all statistical studies.

**Heredity,** as every practitioner knows, is another very important consideration in the diagnosis of angina. The sudden death of either parent or of a near relative from angina or coronary disease is a vote in favor of the diagnosis of angina when the nature of the patient's chest pain is in doubt. Obesity, hypertension, and diabetes are common accompanying factors that appear in the same family groups too often to be merely coincidental. The overweight, hypersthenic man or woman in middle life, who usually has a ruddy glow of health and an abundance of energy, is the anginal type. When chest pain is complained of by these individuals, it should always be carefully investigated.

**The age of the patient** is another clue in the diagnosis. Angina is rare (particularly in women) under the age of 40 in the absence of diabetes or hypertension. It is more common after 40, and its greatest incidence is between 50 and 60. Angina may occur in young people, but is very rare in the absence of an aortic lesion (page 255).

**Race and Occupation.** The symptom is common among Hebrews and rare among Negroes. It is much more apt to occur among executives and skilled workers, especially where the duties are accompanied by the nervous tension so characteristic of our present urban existence. Angina is not as frequently met among races where quieter living is the rule, particularly in the tropical climates.

## ETIOLOGY

*As the clouds roll away from the many controversies concerning the etiology of angina that have filled the 150 years since Heberden's time, the prevailing belief seems to be that it is caused by myocardial anoxemia. But the skies have not entirely cleared, since the work of some recent investigators does not fully agree with this theory. In any event, anoxemia of the heart muscle can most plausibly account for the majority of our present-day views. Angina may be compared to the symptom that we call intermittent claudication that arises from the calf muscles on exertion when their blood supply is reduced. The most common cause of myocardial anoxemia is progressive narrowing of the coronary arteries by an arteriosclerotic lesion. The same interference to the blood supply can be*

caused by spasm in younger individuals, but it is doubtful if this element plays an important part in older patients whose hearts at autopsy are seen to contain rigid calcified coronary arteries. Increase in the aortic tension was advanced by Albutt to explain angina, but it has now been shown that increase in the blood pressure in these cases is by no means a constant finding. Wenckebach weighs the possibility of increased cardiac action in the absence of peripheral dilatation as the main cause of the anginal attack, and he cites the action of nitroglycerine on the peripheral vessels as proof of his theory.

**Syphilis** is a factor in the production of angina only when the luetic lesion extends down far enough in the aorta to involve and constrict the coronary openings. Consequently syphilis explains only a very small percentage of the cases.

**Aortic incompetence** from rheumatic disease may decrease the coronary blood flow and give rise to angina in young people (see Case 39). In severe anemia, the blood entering the coronary circulation is much reduced in hemoglobin. If the caliber of the vessels is still further encroached upon by arteriosclerosis, symptoms may appear when any unusual exertion is attempted. However, with advanced degrees of anemia, the patient's general physical condition is such that he is usually not inclined to participate in severe forms of exercise and consequently the level where pain appears is seldom reached and rarely exceeded.

**Thyroid Overaction.** The increased metabolism that occurs in patients with thyrotoxicosis places an extra load on the circulation, including the coronary arteries. If a mild sclerotic change is already present, but is insufficient to cause a deficiency in the blood supply to the myocardium, this extra demand imposed by thyroid overaction may be just sufficient to cause the appearance of angina.

We can now see the variety of factors that may be responsible for the production of the symptom that we refer to as angina pectoris. Conditions arising in the heart itself, in other organs at a distance from the heart or alterations in the blood picture, provided the nervous mechanism of the patient is sensitive to stimuli arising from the area of myocardial ischemia, may all be the cause at one time or another of anginal pain. Since the pathways of these pain impulses from the heart have become better known, attempts at blocking them by alcohol injections or surgical removal of vital segments have been attended by increasing success (page 256).

## DIAGNOSIS

Since angina is a symptom arising from a purely functional disturbance, we should not be surprised when all methods of clinical examination yield negative results. Many patients suffering from coronary insufficiency will show no increase in the cardiac size, a normal blood pressure, and an unaltered electrocardiogram. If the course is complicated by the occurrence

of one or more coronary occlusions, characteristic signs are very apt to be found in the physical examination and the electrocardiogram. If hypertension is present, there may be cardiac hypertrophy, relative mitral insufficiency, and the other manifestations described in Chapter 9. Occasionally if the electrocardiogram is taken during an anginal attack, transient alterations in the RS-T intervals or T-waves may be revealed that are characteristic of coronary disease (Chapter 24).

## PROGNOSIS

If syphilitic heart disease is complicated by angina, we can say at the start that the prognosis is poor (page 220). The ease of production of pain may be a guide to prognosis in a patient showing little evidence of nervous instability. As a general rule, the easier the production of pain, the poorer the prognosis. When typical anginal attacks occur while the patient is at rest, the outlook is not good. In White's series<sup>395, 396</sup> the average duration of life from the onset of angina to death was well over five years. Mackenzie's study<sup>249</sup> showed a duration of 5.4 years. On the whole, it can be said that the average duration of life from the onset of angina to death of the patient lies somewhere between five and ten years. Exceptions occur, and in rare instances the syndrome disappears entirely. Many patients who suffer from angina eventually succumb to other complications of their arteriosclerosis: in the brain (cerebral hemorrhage), kidney (nephrosclerosis) or lung (pneumonia).

## TREATMENT

Successful therapy in angina depends a great deal upon the influence of the physician on his patient. In the beginning, care should be used in statements made to the patient about the condition. The situation can be satisfactorily and completely explained without using the word "angina." Emotions are closely associated with heart disease, and of all words in the language capable of exciting them, "angina" probably leads the list.

**Regimen of Life.** The management of no phase of heart disease will tax the ability of the physician more than cases of angina, since the sufferer must first of all be made to accept life with a handicap. In those who possess the proper philosophy to do this gracefully, life expectancy may be considerably increased. The visits to the physician are in large part made for the supervision of this period of readjustment in the habits of living. The patient is studied to ascertain what activities can be carried out with safety and how these coincide with earning a living. The proper amount of exercise should always be encouraged, while the dangerous phases of the day's program must be omitted, no matter what the cost. Here there can be no compromise. A skilled physician will have his way and remain the respected adviser of the patient, while the latter continues



to maintain the interest in life that is so essential if progress in treatment is to be made. The physician must encourage and inspire the patient at all times, yet be able to restrain him from engaging in harmful activities without too much emphasis on the limitations. The practitioner who tells the patient nothing and continually describes the incurability of the condition to members of the family is not long retained.

It is most important to follow a definite regime of treatment in all cases, and this must be outlined to suit the individual needs of the patient. Something new, if sufficiently conservative, should always be injected into any plan when it becomes monotonous. Above all the patient should never be allowed to drift along as a chronic incurable case. If the physician has succeeded in kindling the hope in the future at the first interview, he is very much at fault if he does not strive to carry out his side of the contract at all subsequent visits.

A careful scrutiny of the patient's daily routine usually brings to light the activities that most often provoke attacks. These should be forbidden in constructing a program that is planned to allow all the exercise that may be tolerated without pain. The patient should be instructed to stop and rest when he feels an attack coming on, and no task should be started where this cannot be done. If an attack is experienced that tends to persist in spite of rest and medication, the patient should be told to return home and take no further exercise until seen by his physician.

It may be impossible to re-educate some patients to live quiet and orderly lives, to go about their work slowly and deliberately, to take time with their meals, to secure the proper amount of rest at night, and to arrange periodic vacations away from business. Other cases require time, patience, and all the tact that the physician can muster.

A well-balanced diet should be prescribed. It is also important to regulate the amount of food, especially when obesity is present. In some cases food at frequent intervals may reduce the danger of overeating at meal times and serve the additional purpose of maintaining the blood-sugar level at a top normal figure. Protein restriction is unnecessary in patients suffering from angina unless the condition is complicated by an advanced renal lesion.

THE GLUCOSE AND INSULIN REGIME has been popular in some clinics in recent years, but I do not use it in the absence of diabetes. In diabetic patients where insulin is required, care should be taken to avoid hypoglycemic reactions that are attended by an increase in the anginal pain (page 287).

Tobacco has no place in the treatment of angina and should be avoided entirely if the seizures are frequent and severe.<sup>399</sup> Coffee and tea may be allowed in moderate quantities. Warm climates are preferable for vacations when these can be arranged. Moderately high altitudes usually produce no increase in symptoms in the average patient, but some react badly (page 250).

## DRUGS

**Nitrites.** The therapy of the attacks themselves, in addition to rest, consists in the use of one of the nitrite group. These drugs act by their vasodilating effect, both on the coronary circulation, increasing its flow, and on the other arteries, decreasing resistance to the blood flow and thus lessening the work of the heart. The action is peripheral and not on the vasomotor center. Members of this group of drugs that are in common use today are amyl nitrite, sodium nitrite, erythrol tetranitrate, and nitroglycerine. The last two are organic nitrates but are reduced to nitrites in the body and consequently have a characteristic nitrite action. All the nitrite drugs above mentioned have a similar action, but differ in the time it takes for this action to become manifest in the body.

**AMYL NITRITE** possesses the quickest action. It is a volatile liquid, obtainable in ampules (2 cc.) and is administered by breaking the ampule in a handkerchief and inhaling the drug. The effect appears in a few seconds, reaches its maximum in about two minutes and passes off entirely in about ten minutes. Amyl nitrite is rapidly absorbed into the blood stream from the lungs and quickly excreted. It relieves the anginal attack at once but is less convenient than tablets of nitroglycerine, and has the added disadvantage of attracting attention to the sufferer in crowded places where attacks are most likely to occur.

**NITROGLYCERINE** tablets (dose 1/100 to 1/200 grain) are usually preferable as they are more easily carried, can be taken under the tongue unnoticed, and are less expensive than amyl-nitrite ampules. Nitroglycerine is absorbed from the mucous membranes of the mouth and acts in less than two minutes if a fresh, friable tablet is used. The effect may last an hour. It is always well to start the patient on a triturate containing a smaller dose (1/200 to 1/400 grain), for occasionally certain individuals possess an idiosyncrasy to this drug. If untoward effects in the form of throbbing in the head, faintness, headache, or even syncope, occur, it is difficult to persuade the patient to repeat the tablet in any dosage when the anginal pain recurs.

**SODIUM NITRITE** (dose ½ to 1 grain) given in tablet form by mouth acts more slowly (15 minutes) and for this reason has no place in the treatment of an attack of angina. However, its action is more prolonged, lasting in some instances for two hours, hence the drug is useful in prophylactic therapy.

**ERYTHROL TETRANITRATE** (dose ¼ to ½ grain) is an even slower acting drug than sodium nitrite, but the duration of its effect is three to four hours.

All nitrites produce a vasodilating effect that may be readily observed in the skin vessels, particularly of the face where the skin temperature is elevated. The pulse rate rises following nitrite therapy, but this is purely a secondary effect following the fall in the blood pressure. The nitrites have no direct cardiac action. I never use any of the group for the purpose of constantly maintaining a lowered blood-pressure level.

Trichlorethylene has been recently used in preventing attacks of angina in doses of 1 cc. by inhalation.<sup>227</sup> The action does not appear to be one of vasodilatation and no constant effect on coronary circulation in the experimental animal has been observed. The drug has sedative and anesthetic properties, and these probably account for its action. It is inferior to the nitrites.

Alcohol is an old remedy for angina still preferred by some who claim that an ounce of whiskey or brandy has a speedier (and more satisfying) action. The anginal attack vanishes as a sensation of warmth is produced by a dilation of the skin vessels. The use of alcohol should be governed, of course, by the frequency of the seizures experienced by the patient.

**Routine Medication.** The next question that arises after measures have been instituted to control the anginal attacks concerns routine medication. Is there a drug that can be safely given over a long period of time that can be depended upon to decrease the frequency of the seizures? Again we meet the problem of the coronary dilator drugs and their efficiency. Following appropriate changes in the patient's daily regime, it has become the habit to prescribe one of the xanthine group of drugs. I prefer theobromine sodium acetate in 0.3 Gm. (5 grains) capsules after meals. If, after a trial of ten days, the patient feels that the addition of this preparation has helped to decrease the number of attacks, I continue it for a longer period. If any symptoms arise from its use (nausea, nervousness, headache, flatulence), it should be discontinued at once.

While recently reviewing some clinic records of patients suffering from uncomplicated angina, I found that the most popular prescriptions for these ambulatory cases are those containing one of the barbitol preparations. Elixir of phenobarbital, with the occasional use of a purine derivative for a week or so and with nitroglycerine handy for attacks, made up the regime of therapy in a large percentage of the cases. A few physicians, I discovered, still cling to iodide medication supported by nitroglycerine when attacks occur. Some patients, in whom there is no reason to suspect syphilitic infection, demand their "drops" at each clinic visit, stating that the attacks are much worse when the iodide is discontinued. The tremendous psychic factor present in many of the angina cases should not be overlooked when we attempt to evaluate this statement. However, there is no doubt about the fact that iodides in small doses over a long period are less harmful than continued, uncontrolled dosing with barbitol preparations.

I have not used any of the various tissue extracts in the treatment of angina. The nature of the substances, my dislike of any form of "injection treatment" that brings the same group of patients back on the same days of the week, and the lack of adequate controls evident in the literature, have discouraged me at the start. Other features of the treatment of angina that require fewer trips to the office are much more important. Again, a series of injections may act as a tremendous psychic stimulus to one group of patients, making their evaluation difficult, if not impossible, while the

same treatment may cause another group to become weary of the physician and his regime. The last group will end their visits, and either continue without medical care or turn for treatment to one of the various cults. The patients who continue treatment naturally make up in time a formidable group of "cures," but they are not representative of coronary disease and angina in any community, and the physician by his over-enthusiastic embrace of one method of therapy loses the opportunity of following many interesting cases. The occasional patients who have unfortunately read about the value of the "heart hormones" in the daily papers are usually satisfied with the explanation of the status of this form of therapy.

Digitalis is contraindicated in patients with uncomplicated angina (page 272). In some patients attacks may be increased in frequency following its use. In the presence of congestive failure or auricular fibrillation that calls for digitalis, anginal attacks, if formerly present, commonly disappear.

The physiotherapeutic measures of value in the treatment of angina will be found in Chapter 19.

#### ABDOMINAL BELT

(See page 252)

#### ALCOHOL INJECTIONS

(See page 256)

#### EFFECTS OF AIR TRAVEL

(See page 250)

### ILLUSTRATIVE CASES

#### CORONARY ARTERIOSCLEROSIS—MANAGEMENT OF ANGINA PECTORIS—THE QUESTION OF AIR TRAVEL

*Case 36. D. C., an advertising manager of 43, was first seen in June, 1939, on which occasion the chief complaint was pain in the chest of a month's duration. The pain was constricting in character, always induced by exertion and relieved by rest, nitroglycerine, or whiskey. No other symptoms referable to the cardiovascular system were present.*

*THE PHYSICAL EXAMINATION showed nothing of significance. B.P. 130/80. The heart was not enlarged. The electrocardiogram, however, showed prolongation of the P-R intervals. When repeated after atropine, the result was the same. The Wassermann was negative, and the blood count was normal.*

*CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS. A. Etiologic. Arteriosclerosis. B. Anatomic. No cardiac enlargement. Coronary sclerosis. C. Physiologic. Anginal syndrome. First stage heart block. D. Functional Classification. Class 2. Therapeutic Classification: Class C.*

*Discussion.* In this case the diagnosis was made from the history alone. The continued prolongation of the A-V conduction time may be viewed in the light of a decreased blood supply to the bundle of His. There may at one time have been an occlusion of one of the small branches of the right coronary artery with the production of a small infarct involving the septum. The past history, however, failed to reveal any acute episodes of

chest pain that might have been caused by an occlusion. However, the conduction defect produced no symptoms in this patient, and it was disregarded in planning the management.

A review of this patient's daily regime showed habits of living that did not contribute to a successful control of the anginal seizures. He was an executive in a large industrial concern, and the nature of his position required him to spend most of his time traveling between branch offices in different parts of the country. Since the distances were great, air travel was almost always necessary. This brings before us the question of permitting cardiac patients to be passengers on commercial air lines, either for pleasure or when this method of transportation is essential for efficiency in business.

**EFFECTS OF AIR TRAVEL AND ALTITUDE ON PATIENTS WITH HEART DISEASE.** This problem has not been satisfactorily settled, and will always have to be solved by a review of the circumstances present in each case. A few general rules guiding this decision may, however, be stated. The important factors that have a bearing on the decision we give are the cardiac status of the patient, the distance of the flight contemplated, the probable altitude, and the previous experience of the patient with this form of travel. During the past few years I have covered the entire route of several of the larger airlines in this country and have had first hand opportunity to observe passengers on large planes of the transcontinental type. They are usually men in middle life or past middle life, when the type of heart disease present is most apt to be coronary or hypertensive. It is probably not a coincidence that air travel has a greater appeal to patients from these groups. Speed and aggression become habitual; and the air liner satisfies a compelling urge.

Although close attention is paid to the physical condition of pilots and attendants on air lines, there is little or no consideration given to the possible state of health of the passengers. If this question arises at all, it is referred to the family physician who renders the decision after an examination of the cardiovascular system. However, when we consider the number of passengers on air lines today, and the few circulatory signs that are apparent on long distance flights, the situation does not appear alarming. Nevertheless there are exceptions and a few matters should be given careful consideration before granting the cardiac patient permission to travel by air.

In the first place, the anoxemia and the possible symptoms that may follow if the patient is kept for a long time at high altitudes in transcontinental flights are by no means negligible. The possible effect of air sickness on the circulatory apparatus must also be weighed since the incidence of this condition is great, particularly when flying at low altitudes. It is also well to ascertain, if possible, the effect of previous flights on the emotions. If there has been no previous experience on which to render a decision, the possible emotional upsets that may occur, particu-

larly in bad weather, should be given due consideration, if the patient is known to have angina.

Commercial air lines in the United States take passengers to altitudes varying between 4,000 to 10,000 feet. During flight the passenger rests (weather permitting) in a very comfortable, reclining chair. The situation is totally different and consequently cannot be fairly compared to walking at a similar altitude. With the patient resting comfortably, altitudes reached by the plane have little effect on the normal circulatory apparatus. Even at maximum elevations, especially at night when the air is smooth and cool, the effect may be most pleasant and even conducive to sleep. Considering the number of older people who have all degrees of insufficiency of the coronary circulation, if anoxemia had an extremely adverse effect, we would hear about more fatalities during flight. As the matter stands, one air line reports but one fatality in flight due to cardiac failure in over 775,000 passengers. Even this one accident was not believed to have been entirely caused by flying, since the same incidence may occur in a similar number of persons selected at random on the ground.

On the other hand, in patients with slight or easily induced congestive failure, the anoxemia of high altitudes is not recommended. While it is entirely safe for the well-compensated cardiac patient to sit or recline at a maximum altitude of 10,000 feet for a period not exceeding three hours, it is unwise for the patient who has the slightest sign of congestive failure to assume this risk. The same applies to patients with advanced degrees of coronary insufficiency who have severe angina. While anoxemia may not be the factor in inducing attacks, excitement and fear likewise enter into the picture and must be considered. These patients should not be permitted to travel by air.

Only a few studies have been carried out on the effect of different altitudes. The majority of these seem to show a slight elevation of the pulse rate, a maintained systolic blood pressure, a drop in the diastolic level and an increase in the pulse pressure at high altitudes. Increase in the respiratory rate at high altitudes may deplete the blood of carbon dioxide and if continued could produce a transient alkalosis. Stratosphere and sub-stratosphere flying, particularly in transcontinental trips, will bring the problem of anoxemia and its effect on the cardiac patient very much into the limelight in the future. No doubt, engineers and physiologists working together will soon devise a method of maintaining a uniform oxygen content in the plane with automatic adjustment to altitude.

To summarize, I believe that all patients with any of the signs of congestive failure, of recent origin or of long standing, and patients who are subject to frequent attacks of angina should not be permitted to attempt flights of any distance. This will include all class three and four patients (new classification). Patients in class two who suffer from advanced heart disease of any type and who experience dyspnea on slight effort should not be allowed to travel by air in rough weather or to take long transcontinental

flights. They should also limit their flying to lines that do not go above 5,000 to 6,000 feet. Class one patients, after a short trial flight to allow the personal factors to be evaluated properly, may be permitted to plan any trips by air provided that they restrict their flying to the large commercial lines.

The patient under discussion was advised to accept another position with his firm at a slightly lower salary but one that did not entail long flights at frequent intervals. His treatment was begun by a rest period of three weeks which was spent at the seashore. During this time he was given triturates of nitroglycerine to take when needed for pain. Routine medication consisted of a capsule containing phenobarbital, 30 mg. ( $\frac{1}{4}$  grain), and theobromine sodium acetate, 0.5 Gm. (5 grains) after meals. At the end of three weeks he was much improved, and although the anginal pain was still present, the attacks were not as frequent and were much less severe. When re-examined six months later the patient reported marked improvement in his condition. Less tension was present in the new office, and there were greater intervals between attacks. The only medication he was taking at this time was one nitroglycerine tablet as required.

#### CORONARY DISEASE WITH ANGINA OF LONG DURATION—RELIEVED BY ABDOMINAL BELT

**Case 37.** Mrs. R. L., a housewife of 65, was first seen in April, 1935, complaining of pain in the left chest on exertion.



FIG. 103. Roentgen film showing cardiac enlargement of the hypertensive type. Note enlargement of left ventricle. Patient wearing belt.

**HISTORY.** Six years before the date of the first examination the patient began to have typical anginal seizures, recurring frequently on exertion, in cold weather, and after heavy meals. The attacks were relieved by rest or nitroglycerine.

**PHYSICAL EXAMINATION.** B.P. 110/80. Underweight. Prominent abdomen. The

rhythm was regular except for an occasional premature beat. The heart was slightly enlarged (Fig. 103), and a systolic murmur was heard over the apex and in the aortic area. The aortic second sound was accentuated.

**LABORATORY DATA.** Wassermann reaction negative. The electrocardiogram showed a left axis deviation. The other features were normal. Urine and blood count were normal.

**CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS.** A. Etiologic: Arteriosclerosis. B. Anatomic: Slight cardiac enlargement. Relative mitral insufficiency. Coronary sclerosis. C. Physiologic Anginal syndrome. Normal sinus rhythm. D. Functional Classification. Class 3. Therapeutic Classification: Class D.

**Discussion.** This patient used more nitroglycerine tablets for the relief of her anginal attacks than any patient that I have ever observed. Daily averages of 36 triturations (1/100 grain) were not unusual during winter months. No untoward effects were noted.

Attacks of anginal pain occurred after meals, on slight exertion, on going outdoors on cold days, and invariably followed emotional disturbances. It was evident that some other form of treatment that would give additional relief would have to be sought. I had previously used an abdominal belt, of the type recommended by Kerr,<sup>188</sup> with indifferent results in a small series of anginal cases. However, since the patient, while not overweight, had a prominent abdomen, I decided to try again the effect on the anginal pain. The belt was first applied in June, 1939, when the patient was leaving for the seashore. Three weeks later she returned very enthusiastic and stated that she had been able to walk the entire distance from her bungalow to the beach without stopping, a distance of one-half a mile. In addition to this she was able to take "other long walks" at the shore without pain or dyspnea "for the first time in years." The number of nitroglycerine tablets required showed a sharp decrease during this period. She continued to take a "tablet or two" after meals, but this, she admitted, was "more because of habit than actual pain."

Many of the patients successfully treated by Kerr were overweight and had dyspnea in the upright position that was relieved in recumbency. Viewed under the fluoroscope in the upright position, the diaphragm was found to be one or two interspaces below the normal position and its movements were restricted. In the recumbent position, however, a much greater diaphragmatic excursion was noted. Kerr concluded that the abdominal viscera together with the increased accumulation of fat serve as a counter-weight suspended from the diaphragm. The belt restores the function of the diaphragm and aids in the return of the blood to the heart. This promotes more adequate filling of the coronary vessels and accounts for the relief of the anginal pain.

Kerr supplements the use of the abdominal belt with dietary restriction. He hopes that this method of promoting more adequate filling of the heart might in some measure prevent or postpone coronary thrombosis. Abdominal belts are also advised for sedentary workers, chiefly males, who are overweight, in the hope of avoiding symptoms of insufficiency of the coronary circulation.



So far I have not had uniformly good results following the use of the abdominal belt of the Kerr type in patients suffering from angina. In this patient, the application of the belt brought about prompt and marked relief. For this reason, I believe that my series of cases so far has been too small to be of value in giving a fair opinion in the matter. No doubt my selection of the type of patient most suited for the application of an abdominal belt has been poor. Consequently the following case report and discussion will serve as a better illustration of this new method in the treatment of angina.

**ARTERIOSCLEROTIC HEART DISEASE COMPLICATED BY ANGINA PECTORIS, SEVERE VERTIGO, AND POOR POSTURE—SUCCESSFULLY TREATED BY APPLICATION OF ABDOMINAL BELT (PRESENTED BY DR. WILLIAM J. KERR\*)**

**Case 38.** J D, a 61-year-old white male, was seen in the Medical Clinic to which he had come because of progressively severe precordial pain of eight years' duration. The pain radiated to the left shoulder and down the left arm, was precipitated by exertion and occasionally by excitement. He had been seen repeatedly, and all the usual measures for the relief of angina pectoris, including the nitrates, xanthines, and extreme regulation of his daily routine, had been tried without avail. He obtained relief from any single attack of pain by taking nitroglycerine. He had been digitalized because of mild congestive failure three years previously. For six months prior to the present admission to the clinic, he noticed progressive exertional dyspnea and severe progressive vertigo, which was generally precipitated by his rising suddenly and changing his position quickly. This also came on after he had been on his feet for a short time.

**PHYSICAL EXAMINATION** revealed a well-developed, slightly obese, adult white male with a drawn, haggard facial expression, appearing to be chronically ill. Relevant physical findings were as follows:

His posture was characterized by exaggeration of the cervical, thoracic, and lumbar spinal curves. The ribs were fixed in a slightly inspiratory position. The head was thrust forward, and the abdomen was protuberant and somewhat pendulous. The blood pressure in a reclining position was 130/86 mm. of mercury. When the patient stood, the pressure changed to 128/77 (it was impossible to determine satisfactorily the diastolic pressure). The heart was borderline in size on percussion, with moderately good heart sounds. The lung fields were clear. Physical examination was otherwise essentially negative.

The electrocardiogram revealed evidence of myocardial damage compatible with coronary occlusive disease. The circulation time in the standing position was 32.2 seconds without abdominal support. Following the application of an abdominal belt, the circulation time changed to 21.2 seconds. The blood pressure stabilized at 132/86 mm. of mercury with the patient standing and wearing an abdominal belt. Without support, the patient was able to walk only ten yards at a military pace before the onset of anginal pain. With a belt on, he was able to travel 190 yards at the same pace without pain. These determinations were made within five minutes of each other. Studies in tidal air revealed an appreciable increase in the volume per respiration with abdominal support. Fluoroscopy showed a maximum diaphragmatic excursion of 1.5 cm. in quiet respiration. With application of abdominal support the movement of the diaphragm increased to 3 cm. The heart also seemed to decrease its amplitude of contraction with the patient's abdomen supported.

This patient has been followed for six months, during which time he has had only three or four attacks of angina. These were all precipitated by excessive and ill-advised exertion. He is now able to carry on ordinary activity with perfect freedom from pain. In addition, he noticed instantaneous relief from his vertigo, and this symptom has not returned. His symptoms can be reprecipitated by removing his belt and subjecting him

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to exercise. It has not been necessary for him to use nitroglycerine at all since his abdomen was properly supported.

### ANGINA PECTORIS IN A CHILD SECONDARY TO AORTIC REGURGITATION OF RHEUMATIC ORIGIN

**Case 39.** S. P., a colored girl of 12, was admitted to the Philadelphia General Hospital in January, 1930, complaining of shortness of breath and attacks of pain in the region of the heart that radiated to the left arm. At the age of 10 the patient had two attacks of rheumatic fever with severe joint manifestations. A year before admission there was palpitation and dyspnea on exertion. Nose bleeds were frequent. A month before admission, chest pain was complained of following moderate exertion or excitement. These attacks rapidly increased in severity and frequency.

**PHYSICAL EXAMINATION** showed BP 140/40, Corrigan pulse, and marked pulsation of the vessels of the neck and arms. The apex beat was in the anterior axillary line. An apical diastolic thrill was palpable and presystolic and diastolic murmurs were heard over the mitral area. The first heart sound was accentuated. There was a loud diastolic murmur heard along the left sternal border.

The electrocardiogram showed a left axis deviation and prominent P-waves. The T-waves were upright. The Wassermann was negative. Blood count showed Red blood cells, 3,200,000; White blood cells, 15,000, Hemoglobin 68 per cent (Sahli).

**CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS.** A. Etiologic Rheumatic (inactive). B. Anatomic Cardiac enlargement. Mitral stenosis, mitral insufficiency. Aortic insufficiency. C. Physiologic Anginal syndrome. D. Functional Classification: Class 3. Therapeutic Classification Class E.

**Discussion.** Angina pectoris in young people is rare. When it occurs, it is invariably associated with rheumatic heart disease and aortic regurgitation. White and Mudd,<sup>398</sup> in 1927, collected 42 cases in patients under 30 years of age. Stolkind, in 1928, listed 29 cases. Korns<sup>194</sup> and Levin<sup>210</sup> have reported single cases.

Chest pain in young people associated with effort syndrome, acute pericarditis or cardiac hypertrophy should not be confused with the type possessing the typical features of angina. True anginal pain is sharper, usually radiating to the left arm, shoulder, or left side of the face, and is relieved by rest and nitroglycerine. Exertion may show less direct relationship to pain production in young people than is usually the case in later years. This child had attacks when at complete bed rest; many came on during the night; all were relieved by nitroglycerine.

Many times in the presence of a free aortic leak, angina occurs without any evidence of obstruction to the coronary flow that can be grossly demonstrated. The low diastolic pressure that accompanies aortic regurgitation has been stated as a likely cause of anginal pain. However, Hochrein has shown that the blood flow through the coronary arteries is modified chiefly by the work of the heart rather than by variations in the aortic perfusion pressure. Laplace has also demonstrated that the incidence of angina in aortic valvular disease is not definitely related to the height of the diastolic pressure.<sup>202</sup>

The prognosis of angina pectoris in younger patients depends on the degree of cardiac involvement and the complications of the rheumatic state and differs in this respect from the angina encountered later in life. The

type of therapy that offers the most relief of the angina in young people for the longest period is sympathetic nerve block.

PARAVERTEBRAL ALCOHOL INJECTION OF THE SYMPATHETICS IN THE TREATMENT OF ANGINA PECTORIS. (Discussion by Dr. C. A. Steiner\*)

In 1916 Jonnesco<sup>173</sup> first treated angina pectoris by sympathectomy and recommended removal of the middle and lower cervical and the upper dorsal sympathetic ganglia. Later various modifications of this procedure were devised by Leriche and Fontaine,<sup>214</sup> Coffey and Brown,<sup>62</sup> White,<sup>391</sup> and others.

Paravertebral alcohol injections to relieve the pain of angina were first used in 1926 by Swerlow,<sup>268</sup> who injected the upper dorsal ganglia. The greater safety of this method has caused it largely to replace sympathectomy in the treatment of angina pectoris.

It is assumed that the pain of angina pectoris originates in the heart itself and is transmitted from there to the central nervous system. The better understanding of this method of transmission is mainly responsible for the greater degree of success obtained by surgical procedures today than was formerly possible.

White<sup>391</sup> states that

afferent impulses giving rise to the sensation of cardiac pain leave the heart by cardiac sympathetic nerve fibers coursing to the cervical and upper dorsal sympathetic ganglia, but they all pass to the spinal cord through the rami communications of the upper five thoracic nerve roots, as through the neck of a bottle

(Fig. 104). Since these impulses may best be interrupted at the upper dorsal communicant rami or their ganglia, the surgical attack is directed toward these levels.

Obviously surgical measures must not be considered in the average patient suffering from angina pectoris whose symptoms are readily controlled by any of the forms of medical regime that have just been outlined. They are, however, worthy of consideration in cases like this child, where no response to adequate conservative treatment is evident, and where the frequent recurrence of severe attacks of pain in spite of medical treatment results in total disability. Although dorsal sympathectomy is indicated where the risk is especially good, alcohol injection is the procedure of choice in most instances. No case need be denied the benefit of the latter procedure because of the severity of the cardiac lesion, since the patients are not greatly disturbed by the injections.

The purpose of paravertebral alcohol injections is to deposit a small quantity of 95 per cent alcohol in the immediate vicinity of each of the upper five thoracic sympathetic ganglia or their rami communicantes. The destructive action of the alcohol produces a lasting interruption of the nerves carrying the painful stimuli from the heart.

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Some idea of the nature of this procedure may be obtained from the following brief resume of the technic developed by James White<sup>301</sup> (Fig. 105).

The patient lies on his side in his own bed with the head flexed and the knees drawn up. The spine should be straight. The bony landmarks are the spinous processes of the vertebrae, the tip of each marking the level of the transverse process and posterior angle of the rib below. After preparing the back, a mark is made 3 to 4 cm. directly lateral to each spine from the seventh cervical to the fourth dorsal vertebra. Needles 8 to 10

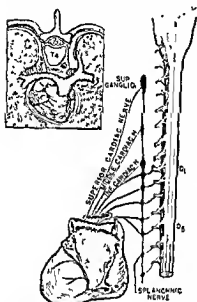


FIG. 104

FIG. 104. Diagram of the sympathetic nerves of the heart. The direct thoracic cardiac nerves are shown joining the second, third, fourth and fifth thoracic ganglia with the posterior cardiac plexus. (From, *The Autonomic Nervous System*, J. C. White, New York, Macmillan Company, 1935.)

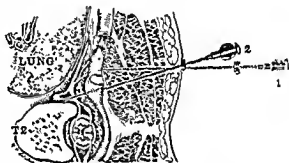


FIG. 105

FIG. 105. Paravertebral injection of thoracic sympathetic ganglia. Method of inserting needles. (*Ibid.*)

cm. long are inserted perpendicular to the back to a depth of 2 to 5 cm. at which point they should be in contact with the transverse processes or ribs. The lower borders of the ribs are determined, the needles inclined slightly in a caudal direction and further inserted at an angle of about 20 degrees toward the midline until bone is again felt approximately 3 cm. beneath the ribs. The needles should then be in contact with the lateral aspect of the vertebrae or the heads of the corresponding ribs.

The sympathetic trunk lies at this depth, running along the anterolateral aspects of the vertebrae and looping over the heads of the ribs. Novocaine injected in this region will diffuse freely

through the retroperitoneal areolar tissue, infiltrating the spinal nerves, the communicant sympathetic rami, and the ganglionated chain.<sup>391</sup>

Making sure that the tip of the needle has not penetrated the pleural cavity, a blood vessel, or the subarachnoid space, 2 cc. of a 2 per cent novocaine-adrenalin solution is injected through each needle. Within 15 minutes characteristic signs of intercostal and sympathetic nerve paralysis (axillary anesthesia, warmth of the arm, etc.) should appear. Then, to insure complete anesthesia, 2 or 3 cc. of a 1 per cent novocaine solution is injected into each needle, followed by the slow instillation of 5 cc. of 95 per cent alcohol.

The patient should remain in the same position for at least an hour, to allow the alcohol to become fixed in the tissues. Usually the patient may get up on the following day and leave the hospital in three days.

Sympathectomy is seldom used since alcohol injection can be performed with almost equal success and with much less risk. However, when it is used, the procedure of choice at present is the removal of the first, second, and third thoracic ganglia through a posterior approach, resecting the second rib.

Obviously, paravertebral alcohol injection can be safely and successfully carried out only by an operator who has had considerable previous training, first in the anatomic laboratory and then as an assistant to a surgeon skilled in the method described above.

The most troublesome complication following alcohol injection for the relief of angina is a painful intercostal neuritis which may persist for several months. If the patient has obtained relief from the anginal seizures, however, this is seldom a matter of much consequence to him. If the needle should accidentally pierce the pleura during its insertion, pneumothorax may result but is rarely dangerous if promptly diagnosed and treated. There is practically no mortality from the injection procedure itself, and even sympathectomy carries with it a very low risk if reserved for selected cases.

Keeping in mind the fact that the cases of angina pectoris requiring surgery are usually the most serious ones, the results are extremely good. From the reports of James White,<sup>391</sup> Paul White,<sup>392</sup> Smithwick,<sup>314</sup> Swetlow,<sup>368</sup> Pletnev and Hesine,<sup>290</sup> and others, it appears that excellent results may be expected in about two-thirds of the cases and marked improvement in about one-half of the rest. The relief obtained from either alcohol injection or sympathectomy is usually permanent.

## CORONARY ARTERY DISEASE INCLUDING THROMBOSIS

This strange disease of modern life.—MATHEW ARNOLD, *The Scholar Gypsy*, Stanza 21.

Angina pectoris and coronary thrombosis are both associated with coronary-artery disease. The former is a functional condition in which the blood supply to a section of cardiac muscle is temporarily deficient, while

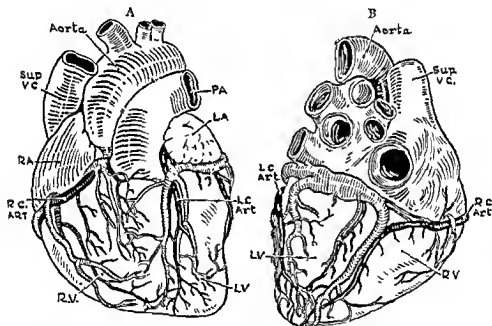


FIG. 106 The great vessels, coronary arteries and coronary veins. A. Front view. B. Base and diaphragmatic surface. P.A.: pulmonary artery; Sup.V.C.: superior vena cava, R.A. right auricle; L.A. left auricle; R.C.Art: right coronary artery, R.V. right ventricle, L.V., left ventricle; L.C.Art., left coronary artery.

the latter is an organic lesion where the blood flow is permanently blocked by a clot, and degenerative changes in the cardiac muscle ensue. These dramatic episodes have focused a great deal of deserved attention in recent years on this typically American disease, and a number of important advances have been made. Electrocardiography has progressed to a point where not only is the diagnosis of occlusion of a coronary artery possible in 95 per cent of the instances, but the site of the infarct can also

be accurately determined. As we view our increasing knowledge with satisfaction, many can still recall the day when thrombosis in the coronary tree was merely an interesting necropsy revelation. Following Herrick's description in 1912, the importance, frequency, and clinical features of acute occlusion were established, and the modern physician has become skilled in its detection.

In a series of 2877 consecutive autopsy reports studied by Levy,<sup>224</sup> lesions of the coronary arteries were found in 25.9 per cent. In half of these cases, the involvement was slight or moderate, causing no impairment of the coronary blood flow. These autopsies covered a 22-year period and show a slight but steady increase in the incidence of the disease. However, it is most significant that diagnoses based on clinical observations alone have shown a greater increase in all clinics. White,<sup>393</sup> studying a group of 2,314 patients with heart disease in New England, reports that 37 per cent were diagnosed coronary disease. It is evident then that the diagnosis is much more often made during life than at autopsy; in other words, we are today acutely aware of the possibility of coronary disease, and its clinical signs and symptoms are seldom missed.

## ETIOLOGY

Coronary-artery disease causes cardiac damage by reducing the blood supply. This may occur as a slow insidious process, not reaching a degree sufficient to cause symptoms until late in life, or it may occur with dramatic suddenness at a much earlier age.

**Arteriosclerosis.** By far the most common etiologic factor in producing changes in the coronary tree is arteriosclerosis (Fig. 107). It was present in over 95 per cent of Levy's series, while syphilis was responsible in only a small percentage of the cases. Much rarer causes of impairment of the blood supply to the myocardium are coronary embolism, periarteritis nodosa, and rheumatic coronary arteritis.

The common arteriosclerotic lesion consists of abnormal thickening of the elements making up the intima of the vessel. Areas of atheroma soon develop in many cases, and these may soften, rupture, and discharge their contents. The rough areas that remain become suitable spots for the deposition of fibrin from the blood stream, and a start is made for a thrombus, which may rapidly develop where the vascular bed is narrowed and the circulation slowed.

Inquiry into the cause of these fatal events in the coronary circulation would again lead us into a discussion of the theories that have been advanced to explain arteriosclerosis. Suffice it to say that many times the stress and strain of modern life are reflected in the coronary tree. Hypertension, if long continued, exerts a harmful effect on the coronary arteries, and the spot that bears the brunt of this burden, and consequently the one apt to show the most change, is the anterior descending branch of the

left coronary artery. Hypertension may be influenced by environmental factors when the individual possesses the proper constitutional background. In this event the tempo of modern life may, after all, have a decided influence on the speed with which coronary sclerosis develops. Coronary accidents have replaced coma as the main causes of death among diabetics. Here the endocrine imbalance resulting from the disturbance of the metabolism of fat and cholesterol plays a major role. Finally, the fact that we may inherit a tendency to early change in the structure of our arteries cannot be overlooked.

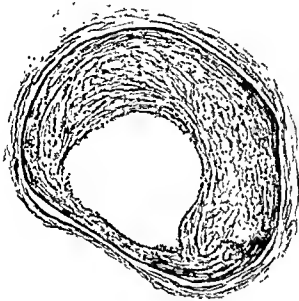


FIG. 107. Atherosclerosis of a coronary artery.

Syphilis has been shown to be no more frequent among patients with coronary disease than among those without it.<sup>222</sup> Syphilitic aortitis may involve the mouths of the coronaries and cause complete obstruction, but damage of the coronary arteries themselves by syphilis is rare. Likewise the part played by rheumatic infection in the production of coronary disease is obscure, although we do know that involvement of the intima and media occasionally has been known to follow rheumatic infection with the subsequent formation of mycotic aneurysmal dilatations.

The role of focal infections in the production of coronary disease is a much disputed and still unsettled point. Likewise, the relationship of coffee, tea, tobacco, and alcohol to speeding the development of the sclerotic process cannot be said to be definitely established. Emboli (air, fat, tumor cells, fragments of vegetations) may occasionally invade the coronary arteries and produce infarction in patients of any age, but this accident is rare.



a bridge of pectoral muscle may be effective by augmenting the coronary supply in this manner.

## DIAGNOSIS

It now becomes evident that the symptoms present in each patient will depend largely upon a number of variable factors and cannot be expected to be the same in every instance. Occlusion of small arteries may take place with slight subjective manifestations. It is quite likely that many times the incident is entirely overlooked since the cardiac balance is either little disturbed or quickly restored. If a large artery is involved, however, the clinical picture will be typical, and the diagnosis may be made on inspection. Between these two extremes, the latent case on the one hand and the patient with a large occlusion on the other, all gradations may be encountered. Irrespective of the size of the infarct, a great deal depends on the previous condition of the heart and whether or not a serious cardiac arrhythmia is precipitated by the accident.

It is by no means an easy task to diagnose the latent case. Subjective and objective evidence of the progress of the sclerosis may be entirely absent until thrombosis suddenly takes place. It is likewise not uncommon to discover a markedly advanced coronary sclerosis at autopsy in a patient who died of some other disease. If the coronary sclerosis advances slowly, narrowing and finally obliterating many small end arteries, the resulting infarcts heal and become invaded by fibrous tissue. The myocardium then becomes progressively weaker and congestive failure may supervene, and at autopsy the heart will show dilatation and much myocardial fibrosis. Is this the heart lesion that we have been in the habit of referring to as chronic myocarditis? If so, it should be viewed in a different light since the fibrous tissue does not have its origin in an inflammatory process but is the end result of arteriosclerosis of the coronary arteries. The cardiac dilatation that occurs usually causes stretching of the mitral ring before death, and the systolic apical murmur of relative mitral regurgitation is frequently heard. More advanced cases may show sclerosis of the valvular structures and the regurgitation may then be a combination of these two factors.

Cardiac failure may be gradual in its onset. As the blood supply to the heart muscle is slowly curtailed, dyspnea appears on less exertion. Edema of the feet may be present at night, and finally attacks of cardiac asthma or cardiac dyspnea give evidence of a diminished myocardial reserve. Pulmonary edema, congestion of the liver, and other signs may be added to the picture at this stage.

**Cardiac Irregularities.** The small infarcts in the myocardium that undergo healing may act as irritable foci, and their presence may then be made known by the occurrence of the frequent premature beats that interrupt the cardiac rhythm. Paroxysms of tachycardia from a succession of these stimuli may be precipitated by a sudden occlusion. The onset of

## INCIDENCE

**Age.** Arteriosclerosis of the coronary tree sufficient to produce clinical symptoms is uncommon under 40. After this age the incidence increases with advancing years, reaching its peak between the ages of 60 and 70. Bland and White<sup>390</sup> have shown that coronary thrombosis with infarction occurs at a younger age than coronary disease as a whole. The highest incidence of acute coronary thrombosis in their series occurred between 50 and 60 years of age.

**Sex.** Coronary disease is much more frequent among men than among women. All statistical studies confirm this statement, some reporting the ratio to be as high as seven to one. Occupation may have a direct relationship to this predominance of the male, since the overweight, overworked, overactive business or professional man of today is often the victim of coronary disease. Levy's studies have revealed that the largest percentage of cases of coronary sclerosis occur among foremen and skilled workers with the professional and executive group taking second place.

## ANATOMY AND PATHOLOGY

An understanding of certain fundamental anatomic and pathologic facts concerning the coronary tree is essential to our discussion. In the first place, the coronary lesion may be microscopic, capable of producing no great reduction in the blood flow to the heart muscle; consequently no structural damage is evident and no clinical symptoms appear. However, if more marked narrowing occurs and thrombosis follows, the outcome will depend on the size of the artery occluded and on the extent and number of anastomotic branches that are present. These branches vary in different patients and at different periods of life in the same patient. As we grow older, the number of anastomoses in the coronary circulation increases, preparing us to withstand the accidents that may attend advancing years. If the process of narrowing is a more gradual one, these collateral pathways may develop to a remarkable degree, thus increasing the chances of survival when the occlusion finally becomes complete.

Sudden occlusions are not infrequent occurrences, in which crises all the cardiac reserve must be summoned for survival. In these emergencies, in addition to the collateral channels we have referred to, some circulation may be maintained through the thebesian vessels which are small channels communicating directly with the interior of the heart. Blood vessels present in normal attachments of the pericardium likewise may be called upon to act as collateral channels. In emergencies even the small blood vessels in adhesions which may be present and bridge the pericardial sac often dilate and come to the aid of a failing coronary circulation. The Beck operation is based on the assumption that a transplant or

a bridge of pectoral muscle may be effective by augmenting the coronary supply in this manner.

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chronic auricular fibrillation is not uncommon as the involvement of the auricular muscle advances. Occlusion, gradual or sudden, of the artery that supplies the bundle of His may cause delay in the passage of the impulse for cardiac contraction from auricle to ventricle (Case 36). Sudden occlusion of this artery may cause complete heart-block. I have seen Adams-Stokes seizures occur following an attack of chest pain and a drop in the ventricular rate to 40. Pulsus alternans may be evident in patients with a sudden thrombosis or in cases where chronic failure has progressed to its terminal stages, and the ventricular muscle is making its final struggle to survive by partitioning its remaining reserve strength.

**Gastro-intestinal Symptoms.** Sometimes, as Riesman has shown,<sup>311</sup> the symptoms produced by advancing sclerosis of the coronary arteries may be entirely gastro-intestinal. This is not surprising when we consider the fact that the vagus nerve supplies both the heart and the alimentary tract. Consequently, abnormal states of the heart may be reflected in the group of symptoms often referred to by the patient as "indigestion." A similar reflex from the stomach to the coronary tree may be possible; this pathway may account for attacks of pain or even occlusions that occur too frequently after eating to be merely co-incidental. Many patients who reflect the signs of advancing heart disease in chronic gastro-intestinal complaints are often treated for gallbladder disease (page 479). Even the pain of an acute occlusion may have an abdominal reference, and if attended by nausea and vomiting, the differential diagnosis may be difficult (Case 101). It is small wonder that many attacks of coronary occlusion masquerade under the term "acute indigestion."

**Chest Pain.** As the coronary lesion progresses, a prominent symptom is chest pain; it occurs usually in paroxysms and is the direct result of myocardial ischemia. This cardiac pain may come on after emotion or excitement, but is nearly always induced by exertion, particularly when the patient hurries up a slight grade. It is also accentuated by cold weather and by overeating. The pain may be of the constricting type and remain confined to the front of the chest, or it may radiate to the left arm, both arms, the neck, or the jaw bone. When it travels down the arm, it is usually on the ulnar side and is felt in the ring and little fingers. A reverse direction of the pain may be met in some patients, in which event it starts in the arm or elbow and radiates toward the shoulder. The intensity of the pain of angina varies according to the individual. It may be quite typical in onset and distribution in some, while in others it may be expressed as a slight ache in a tooth, a finger, or an elbow. Nevertheless, the pain carries the same significance in all. Some patients will describe the sensation that accompanies narrowing of the coronary arteries as a constriction or tightening and will object to the use of the term "pain." However, this in no way detracts from the seriousness of the symptom. Cardiac pain nearly always plays a prominent role in the symptomatology of those whose daily activities are greatest, particularly if these activities are attended by emotional strain. An attack may last a few seconds to a few minutes and is usually

relieved or at least greatly improved on rest. (For a more complete discussion of this symptom, see Chapter 7.)

**Thrombosis.** As sclerosis of the coronary vessels progresses, thrombosis may occur (Fig. 108). The signs and symptoms attending the occlusion of a large vessel by a thrombus are well known. Pain usually appears suddenly and increases until it becomes agonizing in its intensity. It is usually substernal but may radiate to the epigastrium and be followed by nausea and vomiting. When the infarct is large, the patient is extremely pale and has the appearance of one acutely, if not mortally, ill. A cold sweat appears, the blood pressure drops, and the pulse may for a time be weak and almost imperceptible. Often in patients where the lesion is one of long duration and anginal pain a daily occurrence, the attack may not present the textbook picture of pain and collapse, but may be ushered in by a paroxysm of dyspnea, pulmonary edema, or congestive failure: symptoms that characterize advanced coronary sclerosis. In other patients subject to angina, a thrombotic occlusion may occur following an increase in the number and severity of the anginal attacks. The pain of the occlusion is more severe and longer in duration than the pain of angina and does not yield to nitroglycerine.

If the obstruction occurs in a vessel on the anterior surface of the heart, a friction rub may be heard over the localized area of pericarditis, while if the infarct faces posteriorly, this valuable sign is not elicited. The absence of a precordial friction rub following acute chest pain, however, does not rule out an anterior occlusion.

Since the infarct is in reality an area of necrotic material in the heart wall, an elevation of temperature commonly follows its formation. Leukocytosis likewise appears and the red blood cells show an increase in their rate of sedimentation.

If the infarcted area extends to the inside of the ventricle, the necrotic surface encourages the deposition of fibrin, and a mural thrombus may appear, parts of which may subsequently become dislodged and act as emboli. Those originating in the right ventricle lodge in the lungs, while

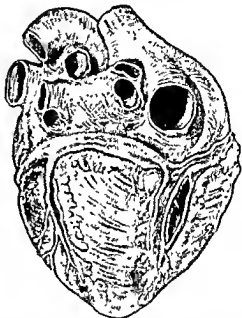


FIG. 108. Posterior descending branch of the right coronary artery incised showing presence of an obstructive coagulum. The diagnosis of thrombus was made by section.

those dislodged from the left side of the heart (Fig. 109) come to rest at points in the systemic circulation: the brain, the spleen, the kidney, the



FIG. 109 Mural thrombus at site of cardiac infarct (marked by arrow). (Autopsy No. 32,390. Philadelphia General Hospital.)

mesenteric vessels, or the extremities. Embolism is a frequent cause of sudden death following a coronary artery occlusion that is often overlooked. It is more common than cardiac rupture. When coronary occlusion

is suspected, or when it occurs in the absence of pain, and the possibility of a mural thrombus is not considered, a primary brain or pulmonary lesion may be diagnosed. Consequently embolic manifestations that suddenly appear in other organs of the body should always prompt us to investigate the integrity of the coronary tree.

Following acute occlusion, a number of cardiac irregularities may appear. The most serious among these are paroxysmal ventricular tachycardia and ventricular fibrillation. In many cases where large occlusions occur, the immediate onset of ventricular fibrillation usually ends the picture.

**Aneurysm.** If the patient survives the initial shock of the coronary accident and the blood pressure again mounts, all danger is not over. Unless care is used in management, a cardiac aneurysm, which is merely a localized bulging of the heart wall, may form at the site of the infarction (Fig. 110). If the patient's activities are resumed too soon after a large occlusion, rupture of the heart wall through the infarcted area may occur. Any sudden exertion or strain during the period of bed rest may also produce the same result.

This is the classical picture of coronary disease ending in thrombotic occlusion of branches of the coronary artery. The symptoms point to the progress of the underlying lesion, and the therapeutic implications are clear. However, not every case is so easily recognized. Where little interference with normal coronary flow is produced, symptoms may be entirely absent until the first occlusion suddenly appears. The presence of coronary disease should be suspected in any patient over 40 who complains of dyspnea or chest pain, particularly if this patient is an obese male. A positive family history or the presence of hypertension should strengthen the suspicion. Many times the electrocardiogram proves a valuable help if suggestive changes are seen. On the other hand, a negative electrocardiogram does not eliminate the possibility, since minor alterations in the blood flow in the absence of acute myocardial infarction produce no marked abnormality. If the patient is seen soon after the onset of a small occlusion, a normal tracing may be obtained. Consequently a repetition of the test in a few hours is advisable, since this may show significant alterations (page 643). Usually any marked changes that occur in the features of the electrocardiogram from day to day in a person who gives enough of a history to arouse suspicion of the presence of a small occlusion may be attributed to



FIG. 110 Cardiac aneurysms

this cause and are valuable in reaching a final diagnosis. It is important to recognize the mild cases and establish proper treatment early. Few of the characteristic clinical signs, such as low blood pressure, fever, leukocytosis, and shock may be evident, in which event the electrocardiogram assumes a place of great importance in diagnosis.

Severe grades of anemia may produce chest pain as a result of myocardial anoxemia. In most of these cases it is quite likely that some degree of coronary sclerosis already exists, and the addition of the anemia is enough to precipitate symptoms of insufficiency. In the same manner, hyperthyroidism, by increasing the metabolism, may place just enough added strain on already diseased coronaries to produce attacks of anginal pain. A similar strain on the coronary circulation may occur in older patients with the onset of paroxysms of tachycardia, flutter, or fibrillation.

Levy has called attention to the production of chest pain simulating coronary occlusion that may occur in persons consuming large quantities of tea or coffee. Tobacco may likewise aggravate the symptoms of coronary disease.<sup>249, 250</sup> Chest pain often accompanies effort syndrome, but here the other features of the examination are usually sufficient to make the distinction.

The chest pain and precordial friction that accompany acute fibrinous pericarditis are rarely confused with coronary thrombosis. The age of the patient and the signs of infectious carditis may serve to make the distinction, although the features of the electrocardiogram in the two instances may be quite similar (see Fig. 252).

## PROGNOSIS

The prognosis of coronary disease is variable. Many times the condition is discovered in old people at postmortem. In direct contrast to the long symptom-free existence possible in some of these cases there are instances in younger individuals where a thrombus forming on a single plaque in a large artery may spell quick disaster. In between these two extremes there are numerous cases where the diagnosis may be made and successful treatment carried out over a long period. Much, of course, depends on the patient's intelligence, nervous temperament, and willingness to co-operate. Some apparently hopeless cases (page 278) may be carried successfully over a period of years with no increase in symptoms, and in some instances even an improvement in the exercise tolerance may be observed. Patients with syphilitic aortitis who have involvement of the coronary arteries at their site of origin do poorly and generally succumb at an early age. Hyperthyroidism accentuates the symptoms of coronary disease but if successfully managed, the outlook is good, for after thyroidectomy the symptoms of coronary sclerosis may again retreat below the clinical horizon and remain out of the picture for years. As a rule, progress of the coronary lesion may be roughly gauged by the ease of production of anginal pain when this symptom is present. Increasing narrowing of the coronaries is reflected in



the patient's complaint that the pain appears on less exertion. Finally pain appearing on the slightest exertion or while at rest suggests an advanced lesion and a poor prognosis.

Some patients, following a typical history of angina, may have an occlusion, and subsequently, when ordinary activity is again attempted, have no reappearance of anginal pain (see Case 40). Here we can infer that the artery occluded and the area of muscle it supplied were the only sources of painful afferent stimuli arising from the heart. Prognosis in these cases should be excellent.

Occasionally autopsy reveals only a very small coronary occlusion that appears insufficient to account for the fatal outcome. In these cases death probably results from the reflex spasm produced in neighboring coronary vessels by the occlusion. This increases the area of ischemia and precipitates fatal ventricular fibrillation. Reflexes from the gastrointestinal tract following a heavy meal may also produce similar fatal spasms of coronary branches. Consequently we cannot say that all small occlusions in their early stages are invariably associated with good prognoses.

While the occurrence of coronary thrombosis is a serious complication in coronary disease, it does not necessarily lead to a poor prognosis. White has reported several instances of long survival following a proved occlusion. One patient<sup>394</sup> survived 24 years and another 17½ years.



FIG. 111. Atheroma of the abdominal aorta.

## TREATMENT

### GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The objects of therapy in coronary disease are to relieve the pain of angina or occlusion and to establish a satisfactory daily regime in order to postpone for as long as possible heart failure, either of the congestive or

included in the *caffeine group*: *caffeine* (trimethyl xanthine), theobromine, and theophylline (dimethyl xanthine); all are purines and therefore closely related to uric acid. These substances are insoluble in water, but when combined with salts like sodium salicylate, sodium acetate, or ethylene diamine, they become soluble and in this form acquire a wider range of clinical usefulness. The most popular member of the group is theophylline ethylene diamine (aminophylline, euphyllin, or metaphyllin). In experimental work on laboratory animals, most observers agree that the coronary arteries are dilated by the drugs of this group.<sup>104, 113, 120</sup> Even when administered in great dilution to isolated hearts, the coronary output increases 50 per cent. Cushny suggests that the effect may follow a direct stimulation of the heart muscle. However, uniformity of opinion as to the effect of the xanthines in man is still lacking. Some clinicians find them extremely useful in increasing the blood supply to the myocardium. Experimental proof of this stand may be found in the work of Fowler and his associates<sup>101</sup> who administered aminophylline to normal dogs after ligation of a coronary branch, and found that the resulting infarct was smaller than in control dogs where the drug was not used. However, it is only fair to state that similar results were not obtained by Gold and his workers. Wiggers and Green likewise found the xanthine group ineffective in increasing the coronary flow in dogs after experimental coronary occlusion.<sup>119, 120</sup>

Taking into consideration the variable factors that exist in every case of coronary disease in man, a definite decision concerning the value of the xanthines is difficult to obtain. While I do not doubt the good results reported in the literature by many observers, I have not learned to depend on these drugs so much to relieve or prevent pain in coronary disease as I have for their diuretic action in cases of congestive failure and in the treatment of certain types of dyspnea where morphine is poorly tolerated.

Another point against the wholesale use of the xanthines is the expense to the patient. The best rule in practice is to administer one of the group, for example, theobromine sodium acetate in 0.3 Gm. (5 grain) doses after meals for a period of a week. If there is no definite improvement in the symptoms, it may be discontinued. Considering the rigid calcified coronaries that we see so often at autopsy, I doubt the efficacy of these drugs as dilators in every case. However, they may be efficient in the treatment of coronary disease in younger patients where reflex spasm of the vessels still plays a major role.

**Barbiturates.** At the present time, sedatives of the barbituric-acid series are very popular in the treatment of coronary disease, particularly when associated with hypertension. While there is no doubt that these drugs serve to allay fear, relieve insomnia and nervousness, and by blocking reflex pathways reduce the number and severity of anginal attacks, they should be used with care and their administration should be continuous only when the patient is under the constant supervision of the physician. Untoward symptoms are not uncommon, while in excessive doses these drugs can do harm. It is wise not to exceed 15 to 30 mg. ( $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  grain)

of phenobarbital three times daily. A mild sedative effect is usually obtained by this dose, which is valuable in quieting the heart and decreasing the incidence of ectopic rhythms.

**Digitalis.** Recent studies all seem to confirm the opinion that digitalis is of questionable benefit in cases of coronary disease in the absence of signs of congestive failure. Ginsberg and his associates<sup>376</sup> studied the effect of various digitalis preparations on the coronary sinus outflow of heart-lung preparations and of intact dogs. They observed an initial decrease in the coronary flow lasting about ten minutes, which was generally followed by an increase for the remainder of the experiment. Variable results were obtained in intact animals, many showing no change at all in the coronary flow following digitalis administration. These carefully performed experiments indicate that the constrictor effect of digitalis upon coronary circulation is not sufficient to contraindicate its use unless there is present an extreme deficiency in the coronary flow. Travell et al.<sup>377</sup> studied the effect of digitalis on cats three weeks after experimental ligation of a coronary vessel and found all the animals were more susceptible to digitalis than normal controls. About three-fourths as much digitalis was needed after ligation of a coronary vessel to cause a ventricular ectopic rhythm and death. As a rule they found that the larger the infarct, the more susceptible the animal appeared to be to the drug, but many exceptions were noted. These investigators concluded that digitalis administered after coronary occlusion, at least in the experimental animal, favors the production of abnormal impulses in the infarcted area that may lead to attacks of ventricular tachycardia and fibrillation. In view of these results, the best rule to follow in practice is to withhold digitalis in coronary disease in the absence of signs of congestive failure. With the appearance of cardiac decompensation, however, digitalis should always be given in sufficient amounts to achieve a therapeutic result (Chapter 2).

**Nitrites** should be used as required for the anginal pain that may complicate coronary disease. Fresh nitroglycerine triturates (1/100 grain) dissolved under the tongue as occasion demands still constitute the best form of nitrite therapy. The tablets should never be prescribed to be taken at stated intervals during the day. Occasionally good results may be obtained by using a tablet just before an activity that previously provoked an anginal attack. In this way it may be possible to open up some collateral channels in the coronary circulation by combining the dilating effect of the drug with the increased blood flow that follows the exertion. A further discussion of nitrite therapy will be found in Chapter 7.

#### MANAGEMENT OF ACUTE OCCLUSION

**Control of Pain.** The first thought is to control the pain, which is usually of a severe agonizing variety. Consequently a hypodermic injection of morphine sulfate,  $\frac{1}{4}$  grain (15 mg.), should be given at once. Continuation of the pain calls for a similar dose in a half hour, and in some cases several hypodermic injections may be required. If possible, the patient

should be made comfortable where he is found by the physician on his arrival, for it is distinctly harmful to move a patient in this condition unless it is an absolute necessity. The patient should not be undressed until some degree of recovery is evident in the appearance, pulse, and blood pressure. The application of local heat is advisable in the form of a hot water bottle or electric pad. At this stage it is unwise to use a multiplicity of "restorative" measures. The acute insult to the myocardium contraindicates the use of large infusions that may add to the circulatory load. It is also better policy to withhold adrenalin and ephedrine unless the emergency is extreme and the patient is unconscious and pulseless.

*Absolute physical and mental rest are essential for the patient, and are usually obtainable only when tasks are found in some other location for the excess number of anxious relatives that usually crowd the scene. It is far better to engage a capable attendant at the start. The type of bed and other matters relating to the general care of the patient with failure of the coronary circulation do not differ from those recommended for failure of the congestive type (page 74).*

Once the diagnosis is established, too frequent examinations disturb the patient. A trip to the hospital to secure an electrocardiogram or roentgenogram to prove what is obvious on clinical examination is likewise no great advantage at this stage of the treatment.

When the pain has been completely controlled, the hypodermics of morphine should be stopped. Enough sedation should be given, however, to insure a good rest during the first few nights of the illness. It is quite possible that the morphine in some patients may induce vomiting, so it is wise to discontinue it as soon as the pain disappears and use as a substitute for allaying restlessness, one of the barbituric-acid derivatives or sodium bromide. Sedatives are necessary in securing the relaxation that is so essential during the first few days following an acute attack of coronary thrombosis. Since nausea and vomiting may accompany the state of shock that attends the accident or may follow the large doses of morphine, the diet for the first day or two will not be a matter of great concern (Chapter 21).

Constipation usually follows the morphine but may be disregarded during the first two days unless a great deal of distention develops, in which event an enema is indicated. It is wise whenever possible to postpone the use of enemas until complete circulatory balance has been restored and the patient is definitely on the road to recovery. Later in the course of treatment a routine laxative sufficient to secure one bowel movement daily should be given and the patient instructed to avoid straining at all times.

**Oxygen.** In many cases following occlusion of a large coronary branch, cardiac action is much embarrassed, and life hangs in the balance. Survival in these instances will depend largely on the aid rendered by the physician and the speed with which he acts. Often the administration of oxygen may prove the deciding factor in swinging the balance in favor of recovery.

In patients who show marked dyspnea and cyanosis, oxygen is best given in a concentration of 45 to 50 per cent, using a tent; but other methods, if intelligently used, should prove equally efficient (page 99). Oxygen brings prompt relief to the respiratory embarrassment and restlessness, diminishes or abolishes the cyanosis, and slows the cardiac and respiratory rates.<sup>145, 137</sup> Levy and Barach<sup>15, 223</sup> recommend the use of an oxygen tent over long periods for patients suffering from acute attacks of coronary occlusion. If the patient is removed from the tent too soon, the symptoms of circulatory distress may recur.

**Glucose.** If we continue to plan our treatment physiologically, we should next attempt to make more glucose immediately available to the overtaxed heart muscle. All laboratory workers have witnessed the prompt revival of the isolated heart of the experimental animal that follows the addition of glucose to the infusion entering the coronary vessels. To produce some measure of the same effect is our hope when we inject small amounts of 50 per cent glucose solution. As previously stated, large intravenous injections are contraindicated, since they increase the blood volume at a time when the heart is already overloaded; consequently, only small amounts of glucose should be used, and all injections should be given slowly. I prefer 50 cc. of a 50 per cent glucose solution. After warming the ampule to body temperature, the technic may be simplified by drawing the entire contents into a large syringe and injecting it into an arm vein. Five minutes should be allowed to inject 50 cc., so that the danger of adding too quickly to the blood volume, as well as that of venous thrombosis, may be avoided. Unfortunately, the same effect is not obtained by giving a similar amount of glucose by mouth. The excessively sweet solution may cause nausea, and slow absorption from the gastro-intestinal tract may be expected in the presence of so marked an impairment of the circulation. The introduction of a hypertonic glucose solution into the circulation has a vasodilator effect on blood vessels, including the coronaries, and this may account for some of the benefit derived from these injections.

If respiratory difficulty is present in the form of Cheyne-Stokes breathing or paroxysmal dyspnea (cardiac asthma), some improvement may be noted following injections of glucose. Caffeine sodium benzoate may be useful in cases of acute occlusion if given intravenously in doses of 7½ grains (0.5 Gm.) every four hours.

I have seen two patients (see Figs. 243 and 244) develop sudden complete heart block shortly after the onset of an acute coronary occlusion. Typical Stokes-Adams seizures occurred in one, followed by death six hours later. In the other patient these attacks did not occur; normal rhythm was re-established in two days, and the remainder of the convalescence was smooth. The management of Stokes-Adams seizures is described on page 405.

**Ventricular tachycardia** (page 390) may occur following an occlusion and precipitate cardiac failure. The attack may end spontaneously, but as soon as the diagnosis is established, quinidine sulfate should be given. The usual initial dose should be 0.1 Gm. (1½ to 2 grains), followed in

two hours by a slightly larger dose, 0.2 Gm. (3 grains), and later by 0.3 Gm. (5 grains) every three hours. Quinidine is usually well tolerated by patients suffering from acute occlusion. When the attack is terminated, it is well to continue 0.3 Gm. (5 grains) of quinidine three times daily as a maintenance dose, for a period of ten days to two weeks. Levine<sup>218, 219</sup> recommends quinidine in 0.2 Gm. (3 grains) doses three times a day for two weeks as a prophylactic measure in every case as soon as the diagnosis of coronary occlusion is made, hoping in this way that such complications as paroxysmal ventricular tachycardia, paroxysmal auricular and ventricular fibrillation may be prevented.

Patients with cardiovascular syphilis may occasionally develop acute coronary thrombosis, in which event the treatment for the acute episode is the same as outlined above. When recovery is complete, bismuth and the iodides may be started (page 214).

Complete rest in bed for six weeks is the prescription in all cases of acute occlusion. While the practitioners of today are expert in the diagnosis of occlusion, many allow their patients to be out of bed before the infarct has had time to heal firmly. Willis has demonstrated that in 5 to 22 days after the formation of a coronary infarct, connective-tissue formation may be recognized, and in four to six months the healing is complete. The value of careful increase in exercise allowance after the initial six weeks of bed rest is therefore evident if ventricular aneurysms and other complications are to be avoided. Useful guides to healing of the infarct are the behavior of the sedimentation rate (page 57) and the subsequent changes in the appearance of the electrocardiogram (page 636). As a rule, return to full activity should not be allowed for three months.

If at all possible, much can be gained by a period of spa treatment at the time when the patient is first permitted to be out of bed (page 513). The education secured here in the matters of diet and activity often proves invaluable. The patient learns to be satisfied with life on a much reduced plane, which may be an important step toward prevention of recurrence of the episode.

A great deal has been written concerning the use of tobacco by patients who have coronary disease. Without reviewing the different sides of the question, I believe that it is safe to state that enough is definitely known about the effect of tobacco in cases of arterial disease to prohibit its use by patients who are striving to live along with coronary-artery disease and avoid its complications.

#### SURGICAL TREATMENT

Newer treatments have a decided surgical trend. Total thyroidectomy has been recommended for coronary disease as well for the complication of congestive failure. This procedure has been discussed elsewhere (page 102). More recently Beck<sup>96</sup> has grafted vascularized tissues on the heart in the hope of providing the myocardium with an additional blood supply and relieving the anoxemia. Skeletal muscle from the chest wall and fat from

the mediastinal and subcutaneous deposits are the tissues used in this operation. A graft from the left pectoralis major is applied to the surface of the heart, which is approached from the left side of the sternum. At the same time the pericardium is roughened to encourage adhesions between the heart muscle and the pericardial fat that receives some of its blood supply from extracoronary sources. Powdered beef bone is used on the surface of the heart in the hope that the inflammatory reaction it produces may increase the number of vascularized adhesions between the graft and the coronary bed. Quinidine should be given routinely before and after this operation, and the surgeon should be prepared to defibrillate the ventricles if ventricular fibrillation occurs at any step of the procedure (page 475). Patients are placed in oxygen tents for variable periods following operation. While Beck's mortality for the first 12 patients was 50 per cent, in the next nine cases the mortality was zero. So far the clinical results of this procedure are encouraging. Improvement in the patient's symptoms is brought about either by the increased blood supply or its more efficient distribution or by interruption at the time of operation of nerve pathways from the heart. Final opinion in the matter of the Beck operation will depend upon the clinical course of the first group of patients subjected to the operation when compared to a control series and the size of the collateral channels that will be revealed in the autopsy specimens.

At the present writing, the physician should continue to treat his patients with coronary disease by the usual medical measures. I referred some patients for total thyroid ablation when this procedure reached the peak of its popularity, but have so far referred none for the Beck operation. In the exceptional case where pain is extreme and cannot be controlled, the paravertebral injection of alcohol (page 256) is the procedure of choice and is attended by less risk. However, like the nitrite the medical man administers, it is only directed toward relief of a symptom and does not strike at the defect responsible for the disease. The Beck operation, on the other hand, is planned to give the heart muscle more blood. If this is accomplished and the mortality remains low, our future choice in the matter is obvious.

#### MANAGEMENT OF CARDIAC COMPLICATIONS IN DIABETES MELLITUS (See page 287)

### ILLUSTRATIVE CASES

#### CORONARY DISEASE COMPLICATED BY ANGINA—MARKED IMPROVEMENT FOLLOWING INITIAL ATTACK OF CORONARY THROMBOSIS

Case 40. G. H., a city fireman of 46, when first seen on 10/3/33 complained of a "crushing" chest pain radiating to both arms, sudden in onset and increasing in severity. Milder attacks of pain similar in type had been present for one month, usually appearing when the patient walked up a long hill near his home and disappearing promptly after a short rest.

The past medical history was negative. The family history showed that his father and one brother died suddenly of heart disease.

**PHYSICAL EXAMINATION.** B.P. 90/60. T. 97.2. P. 100. Ashen pallor, dyspnea, and sweating were noted. No cardiac enlargement. There was a systolic murmur over the aortic arch, transmitted to the vessels of the neck. The lungs were clear. Abdomen negative. No edema.

**DIAGNOSIS.** A. Etiologic: Arteriosclerosis. B. Anatomic: No cardiac enlargement. Coronary occlusion. Coronary infarction. C. Physiologic: Anginal syndrome. D. Functional Classification: Class 4. Therapeutic Classification: Class E.

**Discussion.** An injection of morphine sulfate, 15 mg. ( $\frac{1}{4}$  grain), was sufficient to give complete relief of pain. In two hours the circulatory equilibrium was restored, the blood pressure rose to 110/80, the color improved, and the dyspnea was no longer in evidence.

Complete bed rest for seven weeks was ordered. During this entire period, the patient's condition was excellent. The chest pain did not reappear, and the only drug used was phenobarbital, which helped on several occasions to allay restlessness and combat insomnia.

At the end of seven weeks a gradual increase in activity was prescribed. The anginal pain did not reappear. Ten weeks after the attack, an orthodiagram showed no cardiac enlargement. Three months after the attack the patient was allowed to undertake light duties around the firehouse. Since there was no return of either chest pain or dyspnea during the next three months, a still further increase in his activity was permitted.

This patient was examined at regular intervals from 1934 to 1940. He has remained free of all symptoms. The heart has not increased in size. The electrocardiogram has returned to normal (see Fig. 236).

The feature of considerable interest in reviewing this case is the complete disappearance of anginal seizures following an attack of acute coronary thrombosis. A tempting explanation is to suppose that the branch of the coronary tree that was responsible for the angina was the seat of more advanced sclerotic changes. Occlusion, followed by healing that the complete bed rest permitted, eliminated this myocardial sector as a focus for pain production. The subsequent history of this patient suggests that the remaining coronary arteries, if sclerosed, are certainly not narrowed to a point where ordinary exertion produces symptoms. Due credit must also be allowed for the collateral circulation that took place about this area.

The fact that few drugs were employed in the management of this patient deserves comment. An initial dose of morphine was given, during convalescence an occasional dose of phenobarbital was used, and when he returned to work, a prescription was written for 2-grain capsules of theophylline ethylene diamine to be taken after meals. Nitroglycerine was prescribed and carried at all times, but since angina did not reappear, it was never used. After taking the capsules containing the xanthine derivative for a few weeks, the patient was advised to go along without drugs. No symptoms reappeared; consequently no medication has been necessary during the past few years.

A follow-up study is now made every three months. At each visit, an interval history is obtained, the heart size checked by roentgen examination and electrocardiographic examination repeated.



This patient's record points out that the prognosis in coronary occlusion in some cases is excellent. Younger patients tend to do very well if other factors in the history are good. The favorable circumstances here include the absence of hypertension and cardiac enlargement, and the fact that the anginal seizures did not recur when activities were resumed. In addition, the attack itself was readily controlled, recovery prompt, pain not prolonged, the fever was not high following the accident, and congestive failure and abnormal rhythms did not complicate the picture. An unfavorable factor that cannot be overlooked in this case is the poor family history.

Many physicians, no doubt, could collect a number of similar instances of recovery following attacks of acute coronary occlusion in which the proper period of bed rest has been obtained, and the return to ordinary activities has been gradual. Rest undoubtedly is the main feature of the treatment.

#### CORONARY DISEASE COMPLICATED BY ANGINA AND THROMBOSIS— IMPROVEMENT FOLLOWING CAREFUL REGULATION

Case 41. C. S., an electrical engineer of 53, was first seen in September, 1935, complaining of chest pain on exertion for one year. In June, 1935, an attack of very severe chest pain was experienced, lasting three hours and requiring a hypodermic of morphine for relief. Bed rest for six weeks was followed by recurrence of anginal pain on slight exertion. The patient returned to work two months following the attack but found that activity was considerably curtailed by chest pain.

PHYSICAL EXAMINATION. B.P. 114/70. The heart was enlarged to the left, and a soft systolic murmur was heard over the mitral area. The heart sounds were normal and the rhythm was regular.

The orthodiagram (Fig. 112A) showed a slight generalized enlargement. The cardiothoracic ratio was 0.57. The transverse diameter was 14.3 cm. (predicted 12.8 cm.), cardiac area 132 sq. cm. (predicted 110 sq. cm.), aorta 3.8 cm.

The electrocardiogram (Fig. 112B) suggested that the recent severe attack of pain was caused by a coronary occlusion. The infarct was thought to involve the anterior part of the left ventricle and the septum.

The blood Wassermann was negative. The blood count, kidney function and concentration tests were all normal.

CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS. A. Etiologic: Arteriosclerosis. B. Anatomic: Cardiac hypertrophy. Relative mitral insufficiency. C. Physiologic: Anginal syndrome. Normal sinus rhythm. D. Functional Classification: Class 3. Therapeutic Classification: Class C.

Discussion. A history of anginal attacks of a year's duration followed by an occlusion and persisting chest pain is not a very encouraging combination. The amount of structural damage evident on physical examination that was confirmed by the electrocardiogram and orthodiagram made me hesitate to give this man's family anything but a poor prognosis. However, let us see what he accomplished.

The patient's history revealed that he lived in the suburbs in a three-story house on a hill. Trips up the hill, especially in winter weather, were always attended by a great deal of precordial pain. His work was difficult, and he was constantly under a severe nervous strain. In addition, there was considerable difference of opinion between the patient and the manager of his department. These emotional upsets increased the frequency

of the anginal attacks during the day. There was no time allowed for lunch on many working days, and consequently a very heavy dinner was the rule in the evening. Excess tobacco was consumed at all times, cigarettes during the day and cigars at night. Later it was brought to light that the patient was active in a country club and held a minor township position, both of

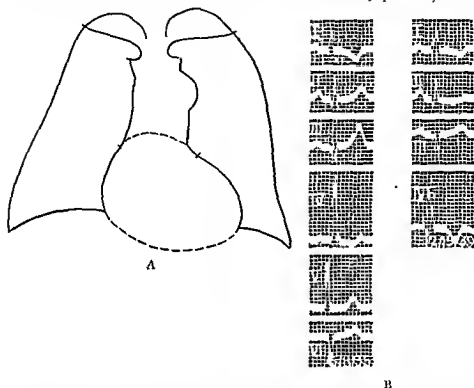


FIG. 112. A. Orthodiagram. Note slight cardiac enlargement and hypertensive shape. Ascending aorta prominent on right border. The aortic knob prominent. B. Electrocardiogram of 6/8/35 shows inverted T-t with doming of the S-T interval in the same lead. The direct leads (old technic) show absence of Q-waves in leads 4 and 5 and upright T-waves in same leads. The tracing taken on 12/15/39 shows less marked changes. Lead 4F, however, is suggestive. Note sharply inverted T-wave and the doming of the S-T interval.

which consumed the greater portion of his spare time in the evenings and on week-ends.

The first step toward readjustment of this man's activities was taken when he moved out of the house on the hill and secured a first floor apartment in the vicinity of the suburban railroad station. This eliminated hill climbing in the evening. Meanwhile, the patient's wife learned to drive a small car and acted as chauffeur on all occasions. In fair weather she drove the patient to the door of his office building and in bad weather to the railroad station. An hour was taken for a light lunch. When opportunity presented, the patient was transferred to another department in his

company that gave him a slight reduction in salary but shorter hours, a new department head, and eliminated trips on the road.

The anginal attacks gradually became less frequent and less severe. Instead of 12 to 14 nitroglycerine tablets a day, he found that he needed only two or three. Lighter meals were taken at night, and tobacco and coffee were eliminated. A longer night's rest was at first made possible by a sedative, but later this was withdrawn. As soon as possible the patient resigned from his township office and the country club, and replaced his golf by developing an interest in book collecting. This was a fortunate hobby to choose, and many of his evenings and week-ends were spent in reading and discussing his books. When summer came, a two-months' vacation was arranged and a bungalow rented at the seashore, where the same program was continued.

This patient has now had five years of comparative comfort. Anginal attacks have gradually decreased, although when he was last examined (December 15, 1939), he reported an average of one or two slight seizures a day. He has learned to take a nitroglycerine tablet under the tongue just before undertaking exertion that previously brought him a little above the pain threshold. In this way, he is increasing his collateral circulation, for when the dilator drug opens up the coronaries, who can say that the light exercise that follows does not force blood along new pathways?

The interest taken by this patient in getting well and the great help given him by his wife in every detail of his program account for the good result. I doubt if any surgical operation directed toward increasing the collateral flow could have given any greater relief than was obtained on the medical regime. The last electrocardiogram (see Fig. 112B) taken five years after the first still shows evidence of the old infarction in the pronounced inversion of the T-waves in lead 1. The heart size decreased during this period (see Fig. 112A).

This case history again illustrates that drugs play a very minor role in the treatment of coronary lesions. A carefully planned program given to a patient who has the will to survive often produces a similar result. If one of the newer coronary dilator drugs had been given to this man continuously during his course of treatment, much undeserved praise would have been given to an agent acting only in the role of a placebo.

This patient also demonstrates the need for individual treatment in coronary disease. The plan of battle should be drawn up when the full account of each hour of the day is at hand. Faith should then not be pinned on a multiplicity of drugs (that are usually changed or rearranged at each office visit), but on the result of the correction of many problems brought to light by a complete understanding of the patient's temperament, occupation, and home environment.

#### CORONARY OCCLUSION (UNSUSPECTED)—SUDDEN DEATH FOLLOWING RUPTURE OF LEFT VENTRICLE THROUGH AREA OF INFARCTION

Case 42. W. L., a white male of 30, wandered into the Philadelphia General Hospital on 11/7/23. He was confused and disoriented but showed a fair state of nutrition.

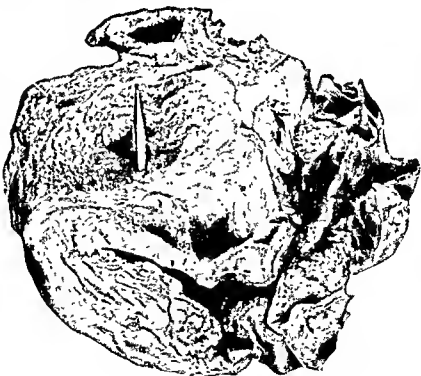
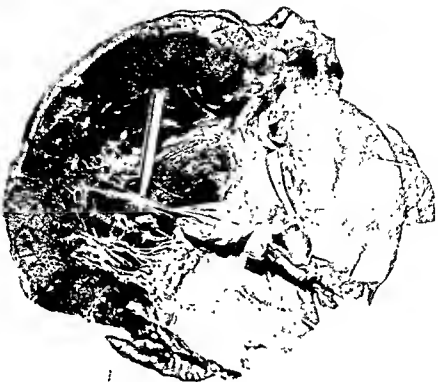


FIG. 113. Cardiac rupture through area of infarction on the posterior surface of the left ventricle. A. Site of rupture behind posterior papillary muscle. B. Posterior aspect. There was an occlusion of the right coronary artery about 2 cm. from its orifice. The aorta showed advanced sclerotic changes. (Autopsy No. 8236. Philadelphia General Hospital.)

lation between the extent of the infarcted or scarred area and death. Many hearts have revealed such massive and obviously long standing lesions that we have wondered many times how the patient was able to survive and carry on strenuous activities in spite of such extensive myocardial damage. Many of the infarcts that are encountered are often larger than a silver dollar. On the other hand, in some cases where death takes place suddenly, no infarction may be present; or if it is found after a search, it may not exceed a ten cent piece in size. In these cases we must seek the cause of death in the profound disturbances of cardiac rhythm initiated by this small area in the myocardium.

In syphilis of the aorta, simple narrowing of the coronary orifices without occlusion may produce sudden death (page 210). In such hearts, the condition of the coronary vessels may be quite satisfactory beyond their point of origin in the diseased aorta.

Hypertensive cardiovascular disease is, in our experience, second to coronary disease as a cause of sudden death. It is, of course, frequently associated with coronary-artery disease, although it may operate as an independent factor in the production of the terminal episode. Hypertension and syphilitic aortitis, particularly in negroes, appear to be a common combination in the production of sudden cardiac failure. The enlargement of the left ventricle, and the sudden demand for increase in the coronary blood flow in the presence of such a marked narrowing of the mouths of the coronary vessels in the aorta, are the factors that explain the terminal episode.

The effect of a sudden mental shock in these individuals was well illustrated by two cases observed recently at the city morgue. A male negro collapsed and died suddenly while at work on a laboring project. His body was brought to the morgue, his associates meanwhile going to his home to carry the news to his wife. She promptly collapsed and was pronounced dead in a few minutes. Her body was likewise removed to the morgue. Their hearts were identical in revealing syphilitic aortitis and the effect of long continued hypertension with marked left ventricular hypertrophy. They differed only in weight, the heart of the husband weighing 650 Gm., and that of the wife 600 Gm.

*Syphilitic aortic regurgitation and arteriosclerotic aortic stenosis are the chief valvular lesions that are associated with sudden death. Rheumatic valvular disease is a distinctly rare cause in our autopsy experience at the morgue. While it may occur, it is less frequent than either of the two previously mentioned. The youth of the patients who develop rheumatic lesions, the comparatively little myocardial damage some of them reveal after the active process subsides, as well as the wide clinical recognition such valvular lesions enjoy, probably account for the fact that we see them so infrequently in our department. Congenital lesions, such as pulmonary stenosis and its combinations, are in my experience rarely the cause of sudden death.*

Rupture of an aortic aneurysm, syphilitic in origin, is by far the most

common extracardiac vascular lesion that results in sudden death. Male negroes appear to us to be the commonest victims of such lesions. Dissecting aneurysms (page 322) that usually result from sclerotic vascular occlusions of branches of the vasa vasorum when associated with hypertension, are not rare. Many cause death by the tamponade that follows their rupture into the pericardial sac. We have encountered 30 such cases in 6,000 examinations.

The sudden fatal attack of angina pectoris is most commonly explained on the finding of coronary artery disease. Indeed, as has been frequently observed, it is the unusual patient in the age group when angina is common who lacks some degree of coronary change.

At times we see relatively young subjects, who were apparently in a good state of health, in whom sudden death occurs with far from adequate pathologic evidence of disease. The part that such factors as temperature and physical exertion play in sudden death was illustrated by a youthful employee of a gasoline station, who, after he had walked several miles through heavy snow, engaged immediately thereafter in shoveling large drifts, collapsed and died suddenly. Complete autopsy revealed nothing but right ventricular dilatation, without other significant lesions.

The effect of marked changes in temperature and weather conditions on cardiac patients deserves further consideration and study. We have noticed that abrupt changes in weather such as sudden, severe cold, in association with a heavy snowfall, will promptly be reflected in the increase of admissions to the morgue of instances of sudden cardiac deaths. Some we cannot explain, while others may be associated with any of the diseases mentioned above.

#### ACUTE CORONARY OCCLUSION COMPLICATED BY COMPLETE HEART BLOCK—RECOVERY—DEATH SIX YEARS LATER FROM CONGESTIVE FAILURE

**CASE 43.** R. McM., a white janitor of 55, was first seen in June, 1930, complaining of dyspnea and vertigo.

**PHYSICAL EXAMINATION.** Overweight. B.P. 170/100. The retinal vessels showed evidence of marked sclerosis. There was cardiac enlargement, a systolic murmur at the apex and an accentuation of the aortic second sound.

Blood count and urinalysis were normal. Wassermann negative.

**COURSE.** Fourteen months later the patient had a sudden attack of chest pain while attempting to paint a tin roof on a hot August afternoon. When examined, there was marked dyspnea, cyanosis, and shock. The blood pressure was 80/60, the pulse 120. Later the pulse rate fell suddenly to 40, but there was no loss of consciousness and no convulsive movements. A bedside electrocardiogram showed evidence of posterior coronary occlusion (see Fig. 243A).

**DIAGNOSIS.** A. Etiologic. Hypertension. Arterio-sclerosis. B. Anatomic: Cardiac enlargement. Relative mitral insufficiency. Coronary sclerosis. Coronary occlusion (posterior). C. Physiologic: Heart block (complete). D. Functional Classification: Class 4. Therapeutic Classification: Class E.

**Discussion.** When the patient was first seen, examination of the retinal vessels suggested that the hypertension was not of recent origin. The heart was of the hypertensive type, enlarged to the left, and the dyspnea pointed to early cardiac failure although some allowance was made for the obesity

A suitable hypertensive regime was prescribed (page 305), and the patient was given instructions in adjusting his work to the level of his myocardial reserve.

When next examined, 14 months later, all the signs of acute coronary occlusion were present. Morphine was given at once for pain. Three injections of 15 mg. ( $\frac{1}{4}$  grain) each were required at two-hour intervals. For the dyspnea and cyanosis, oxygen was administered through a nasal catheter (page 99) at the rate of five liters per hour. It was continued for 36 hours. Three injections of 50 cc. of 50 per cent glucose were given during the first 24 hours at eight-hour intervals. The patient showed gradual improvement following these measures, and on the seventh day, normal rhythm returned spontaneously (see Fig. 243C). No digitalis was prescribed. The remaining seven weeks of his period of bed rest were uneventful.

When slight exertion was allowed at the end of this time, a marked increase in the amount of dyspnea was observed. His activities were restricted in an attempt to conform to this reduction in myocardial reserve, and he was kept on one floor of his home for another month. At the beginning of the fourth month the patient insisted on returning to his work as janitor of an office building. Although he was advised against undertaking the work incident to this position, the patient managed to go along for a year, during which time he continuously showed signs of mild congestive failure. He was digitalized two months after his attack of coronary thrombosis. Intermittent claudication appeared during the first few months following his return to work although anginal pains were never experienced. The claudication, no doubt, was more efficient in limiting his activity than the advice we gave him. In addition to the maintenance digitalis tablet of 0.1 Gm. ( $1\frac{1}{2}$  grains) daily, theobromine sodium acetate, 0.3 Gm. (5 grains) was given after meals. No improvement in the claudication was noted.

Two years after the acute occlusion, edema of the feet became marked and persisted. The heart showed increase in size, and the exercise tolerance showed a further reduction. Ordinary activity produced marked dyspnea. Weekly injections of mercupurin (2.0 cc.) were given with ammonium chloride 1.0 Gm. (15 grains) after meals; this regime removed all evidences of edema.

Two months later, however, the patient began to have frequent attacks of nocturnal paroxysmal dyspnea and died suddenly during one of the seizures. No autopsy was obtained.

Following the posterior coronary occlusion, which must have been a large one, this patient did not have enough cardiac reserve to carry on without discomfort. He was always on the verge of congestive failure. Dyspnea was marked on slight exertion, and later dyspnea of the paroxysmal nocturnal variety entered the picture. Death occurred during one of these sudden episodes of left ventricular failure. Reviewing this record, it is remarkable

how long the patient was able to survive following, first, the acute failure of his coronary circulation, and later, cardiac failure of the congestive type.

The most interesting feature of his single attack of coronary thrombosis is the sudden onset of heart block. When this occurs, the blood supply to the bundle of His has usually been sharply curtailed and momentary cessation of ventricular activity, cerebral anoxemia and Adams-Stokes seizures are not uncommon sequelae. It is strange that this patient never lost consciousness when his pulse fell suddenly to 40. As a rule, the greater the degree of bradycardia, the more serious the situation becomes, and the more likelihood there is that Adams-Stokes seizures will develop. The sudden appearance of bradycardia of this degree following the attack of chest pain enables the clinician to make a diagnosis of posterior occlusion and to predict that the lesion is in the right coronary artery. The infarct that results usually includes the posterior portion of the interventricular septum and the posterior surface of the left ventricle. Since the infarct faces posteriorly, no friction rub is heard.

It will be seen (see Fig. 243C) that normal rhythm returned later. This may be interpreted as evidence of the development of a collateral circulation in the tissues about the bundle. On the other hand, adequate anastomoses in the septum may prevent the occurrence of heart block when occlusion involves this region.

In some instances following an acute coronary occlusion, intraventricular or bundle-branch block may accompany an A-V conduction defect, in which event the gravity of the situation is increased.<sup>263, 269</sup> While complete heart block complicates coronary occlusion in from 0.7 to 4.0 per cent of the cases,<sup>192, 262</sup> intraventricular block has a much higher incidence. Master has reported this finding in 15 per cent of 375 cases. As a group these patients are older and present evidence of more advanced cardiac damage.

Usually the complete block is permanent (page 406); in fact, this arrhythmia may be the only remaining evidence of a previous occlusion when the patient is seen some time later. Many of the unexplained prolongations of the P-R intervals that are often encountered later in life, no doubt represent a more gradual interference with the coronary blood flow. Repeated occlusions have a tendency to increase this conduction defect until permanent complete block occurs (see Fig. 181).

#### ACUTE CORONARY OCCLUSION COMPLICATED BY COMPLETE HEART BLOCK— DEATH DURING AN ADAMS-STOKES SEIZURE

**CASE 44.** W. S., a railroad engineer of 69, was first seen in April, 1934, complaining of vertigo and dyspnea.

**PHYSICAL EXAMINATION.** B.P. 170/100. There was cardiac enlargement, chiefly left ventricular, aortic dilatation, and an advanced degree of cerebral sclerosis.

**LABORATORY DATA.** The urine showed fixation of the specific gravity. The blood Wassermann and blood count were negative.

**COURSE.** On these findings the patient obtained a railroad pension and with increased rest and digitalization showed few circulatory symptoms for a period of five years. During this time he was examined three times and the orthodiagram and electrocardiogram showed no significant changes.



In August, 1939, there was a sudden attack of chest pain accompanied by sweating and signs of shock. His course was rapidly downhill in spite of the usual measures (morphine, oxygen, and glucose). Twelve hours following the onset of chest pain, the pulse suddenly dropped to 45, and during the next six hours, he had frequent Adams-Stokes seizures, in one of which he died (see Fig. 244).

**Discussion.** Complete heart block following the sudden coronary occlusion in this patient was accompanied by Adams-Stokes seizures. When these attacks complicate coronary occlusion, the outcome is usually fatal. The treatment should be directed toward increasing the pulse rate and may be planned accurately only when the cardiac mechanism during the seizure has been determined by an electrocardiogram. Epinephrine is safe to use in cases of ventricular standstill, but in the presence of coronary disease it should always be used with care. Management of Adams-Stokes seizures is discussed in detail on page 403.

#### MANAGEMENT OF THE CARDIAC COMPLICATIONS OF DIABETES MELLITUS

In the era before insulin, coma, acidosis, infection, and malnutrition were the chief causes of concern. Hospital admissions in coma were not uncommon. Today diabetics do not die in coma, and, in fact, are rarely seen in this state. They are living longer and in increasing numbers are showing advanced changes in the coronary arteries.<sup>177</sup> The chief cause of death in diabetic patients is now arteriosclerotic heart disease. Symptoms of coronary disease are much more frequently met in diabetic patients than symptoms arising from arteriosclerotic involvement of the vessels of the brain, peripheral arteries or other sections of the body.

Many theories have been advanced to explain the close association between arteriosclerosis and diabetes. Joslin<sup>178</sup> believes that the increase in blood cholesterol bears a direct relationship to the arterial changes evident in both young and old diabetic patients. The frequency of the onset of diabetes in later life has suggested to some that the disease is the result of arteriosclerotic involvement of the pancreas, which is only a part of the widespread process. However, postmortem studies that show the high incidence of arteriosclerosis in the young diabetic patient are certainly not in agreement with this view. Angina pectoris and coronary occlusion are more common in women with diabetes than in nondiabetic women of the same age group, which is further proof of the role of diabetes in the production of these vital changes.

There is a greater incidence of arteriosclerosis in poorly treated or neglected cases of diabetes. The longer the time before the disease is recognized or properly managed by diet and insulin, the greater the degree of arterial change that will be evident on clinical examination. Nathanson<sup>277</sup> has shown that a high degree of vascular disease may be found in the young diabetic who survives for a period of ten years or more. In an analysis of 100 autopsies upon diabetics, this observer found an incidence of 41 per cent of severe coronary disease. Above the age of 50 years, the incidence was found to be 51.7 per cent as compared with eight per cent in an even larger series of nondiabetics of the same age.

Hypertension is very common in diabetic patients. Bell and Clawson<sup>26</sup> state that the incidence of hypertension is five times as great among diabetics as among nondiabetics. This in turn has an influence on the degree of arteriosclerotic change in the coronary tree. The increase in the blood pressure so common among diabetics cannot be attributed to the arteriosclerosis. Obesity is certainly a factor that deserves consideration, as well as the variety of metabolic alterations that accompany diabetes.

Many theories have been advanced to explain the development of arteriosclerosis (page 541). Since the majority of cases of diabetes in our country are over 40, an age when sclerotic changes are frequently encountered in nondiabetic patients, the problem presented is by no means an easy one. Furthermore, there are no differences in the fundamental character of the pathologic change in the two groups of patients. Often a high degree of sclerosis can be demonstrated in young people who have diabetes that has been improperly controlled. To explain this, we again come to cholesterol, a substance that no doubt holds the key to the mystery. The faulty metabolism that produces high concentration of this substance in the blood may have a direct relationship to the sclerosis. The high blood sugar of the diabetic is likewise not a silent chemical abnormality.

The effect of the dietary beliefs that characterized the diabetic management during different epochs may provide some important clues in the future in regard to the etiology of arteriosclerosis. In the days before insulin, the high fat, low carbohydrate schedules favored sclerosis. High carbohydrate diets combined with proper insulin regulation may be shown in the future to slow the process.

Explanations of some of the other aspects of the problem of arteriosclerosis and its association with diabetes are not available. For example, why the same pathologic change appears to affect one section of the arterial system to a greater degree than another section remains unsolved.

Since the important cardiac lesion in diabetes is coronary sclerosis, it is not surprising that the incidence of angina pectoris in diabetic patients is high. Root and Graybiel<sup>321</sup> reported 210 cases of angina from a series of 7,000 cases of diabetes. Of these patients 122 were males and 88 females. The much higher relative proportion of females in this series emphasizes the importance of diabetes in the etiology. Angina may occur in the diabetic patient who has had the disease for some years, and it is more common in patients who have had indifferent treatment. Consequently, when angina appears in young individuals, in addition to searching for evidences of syphilitic infection, it is extremely important to think of the possibility of diabetes.

The presence of diabetes usually increases the gravity of the prognosis in angina. In a series of 136 fatal cases reported by Root and Graybiel, the average duration of life from the time of the first attack of angina was two years, the majority of deaths (52.5 per cent) occurring during the first year. The early detection of diabetes, followed by careful treatment, is therefore extremely important in the prevention of angina.

In some cases marked coronary sclerosis may be present and give no symptoms until occlusion occurs. If this possibility is overlooked and attention focused on the diabetes, a diagnosis of diabetic coma might possibly be made. However, an estimation of the blood sugar and an electrocardiogram usually make the differential diagnosis.

In the management of the cardiac patient who has well-established coronary disease, it is extremely important to realize that the diabetes may be much improved by accurate measures, whereas the symptoms of coronary disease may grow proportionately worse. I have seen serious accidents result from a too rapid reduction in the blood-sugar level. Overdosage with insulin with the sudden production of hypoglycemia is usually responsible, but an extremely low carbohydrate diet may have the same effect. In these cases prompt relief may be obtained by supplying the heart muscle with the necessary glucose by the use of intravenous injections of 20 cc. of a 50 per cent solution.

In the treatment of coronary disease in an elderly diabetic patient, insulin is not contraindicated. It is well to begin with a diet slightly under the total energy requirements: protein, 2/3 Gm. per kilo.; carbohydrate, 3 Gm. per kilo.; and fat to make up 15 calories per kilo. Insulin should be started in very small doses and increased with caution until all sugar disappears from the urine. Frequent blood-sugar determinations should be made in order that reactions may be avoided. A protective dose of 15 Gm. of carbohydrate in the form of orange juice two hours after insulin is a great aid in preventing hypoglycemia in the treatment of elderly patients with coronary disease. Fear of insulin shock, however, should not prevent the careful therapeutic use of insulin in this group. Overdosage will give untoward effects, but this is equally true with regard to many other valuable remedies that we use in daily practice. Insulin carelessly given will cause cardiac pain which may be dangerous. Insulin cautiously given to the same patient with a properly calculated diet will give great relief.

In rare instances of spontaneous hypoglycemia (hyperinsulinism) the predominating symptom in older patients may be chest pain.<sup>392</sup> Here the relationship of angina to hunger should serve to arouse the suspicions of the examiner. Relief of the attack following the ingestion of sugar in a readily assimilated form is prompt. I have seen one patient of this type, a woman of 52, who was first treated by a neurologist for "petit mal." At the onset weakness, frequent mental lapses and anxiety were prominent symptoms. On questioning this patient, when she was sent to me because of the additional symptom of precordial pain, she stated that one of the "nervous habits" that she was instructed to overcome was excessive appetite. To hide her increasing desire for food, she made frequent visits to a neighborhood restaurant when she felt a "spell" coming on. She even provided for emergencies when the restaurant was closed by hiding pound boxes of candy at strategic points about the house. The first time I examined the patient, I prescribed a reduction diet and nitroglycerine. These directions

were quickly changed when further study, in addition to the signs of moderate sclerosis and slight cardiac enlargement, showed a fasting blood sugar of 60 mg. per cent.

The management of attacks of coronary thrombosis in diabetic patients, with the exception of careful dietary regulation and insulin, differs in no respect from the regime outlined on page 272. The insulin will usually be found to be insufficient in most cases and will have to be carefully increased. If a few days elapse before this higher blood-sugar level is discovered, no harm results, while hypoglycemia produced by careless insulin dosage in these acute cases may be dangerous.

Congestive failure, while not a common complication in diabetic patients, usually causes a rise in the blood sugar, and additional insulin must be administered as indicated. Treatment of the edema consists in the use of digitalis (page 76), and diuretic drugs. A low carbohydrate diet is useful, and small frequent feedings should be given (Chapter 21).

#### DIABETES MELLITUS COMPLICATED BY ARTERIOSCLEROSIS WITH ANGINA AND INTERMITTENT CLAUDICATION

**CASE 45.** M. F., a Jewish merchant of 44, was first seen November 7, 1938, complaining of precordial pain and shortness of breath.

**HISTORY** In the fall of 1936 diabetes was first discovered and the patient was placed on a diet with insulin. On exertion at this time he complained of pain in the calves of both legs which was relieved by rest. Six weeks before the first examination he noticed tightness in his chest on exertion; this was also relieved by rest. An occasional spell of dyspnea was experienced during the night. Recently he had a severe seizure that required a hypodermic of morphine for relief. The patient's father had hypertension. His mother had diabetes.

**PHYSICAL EXAMINATION.** Height 5' 5", weight 200 pounds, B.P. 106/60. Pulse 80. Marked pallor, slight dyspnea. Heart sounds weak and distant. Rhythm regular. Slight cardiac enlargement to the left. The liver was not palpable. Marked sclerosis was evident in peripheral vessels. No edema.

**LABORATORY DATA.** Orthodiagram (Fig. 114A) shows cardiac enlargement of the hypertensive type. The electrocardiogram (Fig. 114B) shows T-wave changes in all leads, the most marked alterations appearing in lead 4F.

**DIAGNOSIS.** A. Etiologic: Diabetes. Arteriosclerosis. B. Anatomic: Cardiac enlargement. Old coronary infarction. Coronary sclerosis. C. Physiologic: Anginal syndrome. Paroxysmal cardiac dyspnea. D. Functional Classification: Class 3. Therapeutic Classification: Class E.

**Discussion.** The family history here is most significant. Both the patient's mother and father were overweight. In addition, his mother had diabetes, and his father had hypertension.

This patient at 44 showed evidence of advanced arteriosclerosis in eye grounds and in peripheral vessels. The cramp-like pains in the calves of the legs on walking, that were relieved by rest, and the characteristic chest pain confirmed the impression of widespread arteriosclerosis.

The obesity must be considered an important factor in precipitating the diabetes, which may have been present and unrecognized for many years prior to the time he developed intermittent claudication and first visited his physician.

The attacks of dyspnea at night point to left ventricular failure secondary to the coronary disease. Theophylline ethylene diamine was given in doses

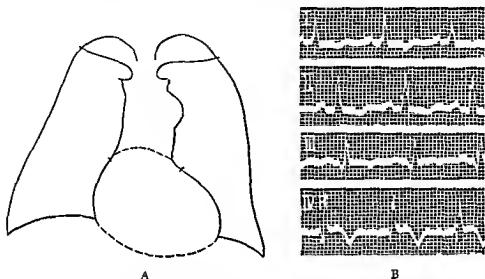


FIG. 114 A. The orthodiagram. Cardiac enlargement is present B. The electrocardiogram. Marked T-wave changes are present in all leads. The most characteristic deformity is seen in lead 4F. Here there is slight elevation of the RS-T interval above the isoelectric line and the T-wave is deeply inverted. There is a small Q-wave in lead 3.

of 0.3 Gm. (2 grains) after meals and hypodermic injections of morphine for severe nocturnal dyspnea. Following the last attack of dyspnea, the patient was digitalized.

## 9

### HYPERTENSIVE CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE

Diseases never follow the same pattern, even those which are placed in one group. There are no more two diseases identical in course than there are two leaves of a plant exactly similar.  
—CORVISART.

Essential hypertension and its complications are problems of everyday practice. Since the hypertensive process, once established, places a great strain on the circulation, many of the complications that arise are related to the cardiovascular system. In some patients the duration from onset to heart failure is a short one; others show a great tolerance to the presence of an increased blood pressure over long periods, and cardiac symptoms occur late, if at all, in the course of the disease.

The terms employed in the past to designate this type of cardiac disease have been responsible for much confusion. Of these, "chronic myocarditis" is one still used by many physicians to designate any type of nonsyphilitic heart disease seen after the age of 40. Although this simplifies their diagnostic problems considerably, the use of the term does not give full recognition to the fundamental causes of the heart failure in many of the cases. Furthermore, the term "myocarditis," aside from being a bugbear to statisticians, is in itself misleading. There is no inflammatory process present in the hearts of this group, even when examined microscopically. If the presence of fibrous tissue is discovered in the myocardium, it is by no means proof of a pre-existing inflammation, since it may be the result of antecedent coronary occlusion with infarction of a large or small area of heart muscle. Cardiorenal disease is also an unsatisfactory term to use in referring to cases of cardiac enlargement accompanied by signs of cardiac (rarely renal) failure.

Hypertension is merely a symptom. However, when it becomes established, and there is continued elevation of both systolic and diastolic levels of the blood pressure, we speak of the condition in the absence of a known cause as essential hypertension. This condition we are apt to regard as a disease entity. While it is true that its cause or causes are still unknown, recent investigations are clearing the picture, and many of the widely scattered facts in literature may be utilized in treatment. Consequently an inquiry into the known causes of hypertension seems appropriate at this time.

## ETIOLOGY

The classification of Williams and Harrison<sup>100</sup> on page 294 is an excellent etiologic summary.

This grouping shows that a variety of clinical conditions may cause elevation of the systolic and diastolic blood pressures.

Among the neurogenic are included first of all the psychoneurotic group, often mistaken clinically for thyrotoxicosis, in whom marked fluctuations in blood pressure occur following emotional upsets. Other symptoms of neurosis are present, and for this reason sedatives like phenobarbital are a great aid in management. In other cases following long periods of stress and strain, we may observe an increased blood pressure. The correction of environmental influence in these instances tends to restore the blood pressure to normal.

The injuries to the brain stem in the region of the vasomotor center, which occur in diphtheria, poliomyelitis, and encephalitis and are accompanied by high blood pressure levels are included under the medullary form. The hypertension in these cases disappears following recovery. The association of hypertension with the increased intracranial pressure of skull fractures is well known.

Laboratory animals often show increase in blood pressure following reflex stimulation of the carotid sinus and aortic depressor nerves. In man, elevation of the blood pressure during an attack of angina or following a coronary occlusion may occasionally be the result of a reflex mechanism from the heart. Often this elevation will disappear following recovery from an attack of occlusion.

**Endocrine Factors.** When the action of the various endocrine substances on the circulation and blood pressure became known, it was not unusual that the attention of many investigators should turn in this direction for a solution to the riddle of hypertension. The suprarenal medulla was investigated and found to secrete a very powerful hormone possessing a constricting action. Proof was thought conclusive when hyperplasia of this area was found in some hypertensive individuals, and when patients with adenomas of the suprarenal cortex exhibited hypertension. However, evidence to the contrary soon accumulated, for all hypertensive patients did not show change in the region of the suprarenal cortex. The theory that hypertension is caused by excess adrenalin secretion has been further exploded by the failure of modern delicate methods to detect adrenalin in amounts in excess of normal in the blood of hypertensive subjects.

**Pituitary disease** may be associated at times with hypertension when there is excessive secretion from the posterior lobe (basophilic adenoma). Here again adequate proof is lacking, since attempts to demonstrate excess of this hormone in the circulating blood of hypertensive patients have failed.

It is a common observation that vasomotor disturbances occasionally associated with increase in the blood pressure accompany the menopause.

TABLE VII  
CLASSIFICATION OF HYPERTENSION\*

(Reprinted by permission of the author and the editor of the *Annals of Internal Medicine*)

I. NEUROGENIC

- A. Psychogenic
  - 1. Psychoneurotic §
  - 2. Stress and strain
- B. Medullary
  - 1. Diphtheria §
  - 2. Poliomyelitis §
  - 3. Encephalitis §
- C. Increased intracranial pressure §
  - 1. Carotid sinus †
  - 2. Aortic depressor nerves †
  - 3. Ischemic muscle
    - a. Cardiac
    - b. Skeletal

II. ENDOCRINE

- A. Pituitary (basophilic hyperplasia—Cushing's syndrome)
- B. Adrenal
  - 1. Medullary-adrenalin (pheochromocytoma) †
  - 2. Cortical tumors
- C. Ovarian
  - 1. Menopause
  - 2. Arrhenoblastoma

III. RENAL

- 1. Acute and chronic glomerular nephritis §
- 2. Obstruction to urine flow §
  - (a) Congenital anomalies §
  - (b) Ureteral stricture §
  - (c) Urethral obstruction
  - (d) Pelvic tumors
  - (e) "Spinal" bladder
- 3. Urinary tract infection
  - (a) Pyelitis §
  - (b) Pyelonephritis (classical or masked) §
- 4. Diseases of renal arteries
  - (a) Renal atheroma (large and small arteries)
  - (b) Arteriolar sclerosis ‡
  - (c) Infarcts of kidney
- 5. Tumors of kidney
  - (a) Wilms tumor §
  - (b) Other tumors
- 6. Coarctation of aorta
- 7. Renal calculi

IV. METABOLIC

- 1. Hypercholesterolemia (renal atheroma ?)
- 2. Gout (uric acid deposits in kidneys ?)

V. CONGESTIVE HEART FAILURE

VI. MIXED AND UNCLASSIFIED CAUSES OF HYPERTENSION

\* This does not include patients with elevation of systolic pressure only.

§ These conditions are likely causes of elevated blood pressure in children or young adults.

† Demonstrated in animals but not in man.

‡ Although arteriolar sclerosis is probably initiated by hypertension in most instances, it tends to cause a further rise in blood pressure.



However, only a small percentage of women develop hypertension at this time, and certainly not a greater number than the hereditary tendency to this disease would account for. The disturbed relationship between the endocrine glands or the endocrine balance, as we like to call it, because of the presence of less ovarian secretion at the menopause, may explain the pressure increase in these cases. The same hypothesis of imbalance may be utilized to account for the association between hyper- and hypothyroidism, diabetes, and hypertension.

**Renal Factors.** Hypertension may be renal in origin. This thought was originally advanced by Richard Bright, when he suggested a causal relationship between renal disease and cardiac enlargement. Recently the investigations of Goldblatt and his colleagues have again focused attention on the kidney as a cause of essential hypertension. These workers began with the premise that hypertension is associated with vascular disease of the kidney. The renal circulatory changes they believe are associated with ischemia. By using an adjustable clamp they produced constriction of any desired degree of the main renal artery of laboratory animals. In 1932, Goldblatt and his associates reported the production of persistent hypertension in dogs for the first time by renal ischemia. These results were soon confirmed, and studies to determine the mechanism of the production of the hypertension followed. Although space is not available to discuss these important contributions in detail,<sup>A</sup> the possible mechanisms whereby hypertension can result from renal ischemia will be mentioned.

Goldblatt first considers the increase in peripheral vascular resistance that comes about in order to elevate the pressure and improve the blood flow through the ischemic kidney. This may be produced by a nervous reflex from the kidney that is effective through the vasomotor apparatus. It may also be induced by the formation of a substance by the ischemic kidney which accumulates in the blood and acts directly on the contractile elements of the arteries or indirectly by first affecting the nervous vasomotor apparatus. Such a substance, however, has not been demonstrated.

**NERVOUS REFLEX.** All the experiments of Goldblatt and his co-workers that have been performed to date tend to eliminate a nervous reflex from the kidney as the mechanism responsible for increased peripheral resistance. On the other hand, their published studies point to the likelihood of a humoral mechanism of renal origin as a cause for the increased peripheral vascular resistance that produces the elevation of the blood pressure. Whether the substance is secreted or excreted by the ischemic renal parenchyma and how it finds its way into the circulation are unsolved problems.

**ENDOCRINE STIMULATION.** Increase in blood pressure may also be caused by stimulation of the endocrine glands by the same unknown substance from the ischemic kidney. The hypophysis and the adrenal glands have been studied with this thought in mind, but the experiments have been inconclusive.

<sup>A</sup> 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132.

**RENAL HUMORAL MECHANISM.** The present status of his studies on experimental hypertension has been summarized by Goldblatt<sup>121</sup>

. . . it appears to be established beyond reasonable doubt that the hypertension which develops after constriction of the main renal arteries or as a result of renal ischemia produced by any method is due to some humoral mechanism of renal origin. Evidence is accumulating to justify the conclusion that the results of these studies on animals may be directly applicable to the pathogenesis of both the benign and malignant phases of essential hypertension in man, which is associated with the presence of intrarenal or extrarenal vascular or other disease that can produce renal ischemia. Further knowledge of the pathogenesis and perhaps treatment of this condition will depend upon the establishment of this conclusion.

**COARCTATION OF THE AORTA** is included under the renal heading in the classification proposed by Williams and Harrison, since experimental narrowing of the aorta above the level of the renal arteries is followed by hypertension, while constriction below the renal arteries will not produce it. The renal origin of many cases of hypertension has undoubtedly been overlooked until recent years. The management of these patients now includes a careful renal study, and high percentages of abnormal pyelograms have already been reported.

The metabolic group includes patients who have gout with an increase in the blood uric acid, also those with hypercholesterolemia. Even in these gouty individuals urate deposits in the kidneys have been considered in relation to the occurrence of hypertension.

In heart failure the systolic and diastolic pressures may fall to normal levels or below and improve when the congestive manifestations fade from the picture. However, in other cases failure may cause hypertension to appear, and improvement is accompanied by a fall in pressure. These unusual cases are given a separate grouping in the classification.

**Mixed or Unclassified.** Finally, it is obvious that in many instances more than one factor may be operative in the production of the hypertension, while in others no cause whatsoever will be evident after an exhaustive study has been carried out. These cases are grouped under the heading of mixed and unclassified causes.

### MALIGNANT HYPERTENSION

When the appearance of essential hypertension is followed by rapid changes in all the arterioles of the body, we speak of the condition as malignant hypertension. This is not a separate disease, but merely a variety of essential hypertension that appears in a different pattern. It is a leaf of the same plant, growing a little more rapidly to wither and die ahead of the others.

In malignant hypertension the factor or factors concerned in the hyper-

tensive process operate in such a manner as to speed up the sequence of events. The pressures, particularly the diastolic, seek higher levels, at which they are sustained; intracranial pressure rises and the afferent glomerular vessels become constricted. The latter change occurs quickly, leading to an irreversible narrowing in the vessel wall.

### INCIDENCE

**Race.** The incidence of hypertension appears to be increasing, a fact that we are in the habit of blaming on the tempo of modern existence. We know that hypertension is rare among the Chinese and other races in the Far East who lead more tranquil lives and among African negroes in the primitive state. On the other hand, hypertension is quite common among negroes living in large cities in America, occurring more frequently and at an earlier age in them than in members of the white race. Diet and manner of living are the factors that are most often invoked to explain this difference.

**Age and Sex.** Life, we like to be told, begins at 40. If this is so, perhaps it is more than coincidental that hypertension selects the same period of life for its onset in over 80 per cent of the cases. Cardiac complications appear about ten years later. Hypertension is equally common in both sexes. The lighter occupations undertaken by women may explain the greater mortality rate observed among men and the quicker course the disease takes in the male once it is established.

**Familial Tendency.** Every general practitioner knows that angina and cerebral hemorrhage appear more often in some families than in others and that either may be the final result of a long standing hypertensive process (Fig. 115). A characteristic bodily configuration is generally observed. Hypertensive or sthenic types of patients are inclined to be obese and have broad deep chests and short thick necks. Obesity, hypertension, and diabetes are closely allied disorders that appear too often in certain families to be explained on any other than hereditary grounds. According to the statistics furnished by different observers, from 50 to 70 per cent of all patients who have essential hypertension give a family history of the condition.

**SUSCEPTIBILITY.** Is there any way of sorting out in the early years those patients who will eventually show a permanent increase in the blood pressure level? This is obviously an important question and closely allied to treatment, for application of protective measures at an early age might reduce the incidence and the complications in the later years. In a person predisposed to hypertension, we have reason to suspect that the defect lies, in part at least, in the sympathetic system. Environmental stimuli produce changes in the blood pressure more readily in these individuals than in normal persons of the same age. Although these variations are at first intermittent, if the stimuli that produce them are continuously repeated, the changes may become permanent.

**TEST FOR SUSCEPTIBILITY.** A very simple test has been suggested to determine the presence of this over-reaction of the blood pressure to stimu-

## HEREDITY AND HYPERTENSION

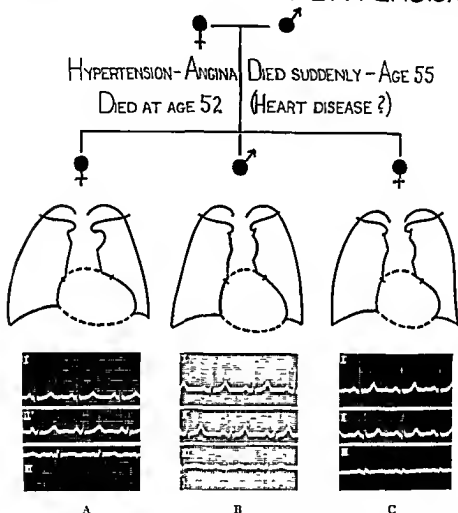


FIG. 115 A, Housewife of 48. Dyspnea and anginal pain present for two years. Overweight. B.P. 210/120. Sclerosis of retinal vessels. Marked cardiac enlargement. Systolic murmurs over apex and aortic areas. Electrocardiogram (above) shows marked left axis deviation. B, Mechanic of 45. Slight dyspnea on exertion. Overweight. B.P. 180/110. Slight sclerosis of retinal arteries. Moderate cardiac enlargement. Soft systolic apical murmur. Electrocardiogram (above) shows a slight left axis deviation. C, Housewife of 42. Dyspnea on exertion for two years. No other symptoms. Overweight. Moderate cardiac enlargement. No murmurs. Electrocardiogram (above) normal. B.P. 170/100

lation. If the patient's hand and arm are placed in ice water at  $4^{\circ}$  to  $5^{\circ}$  C. ( $39.2^{\circ}$  to  $41^{\circ}$  F.), a strong stimulus is produced, and the blood pressure

rises. In normal patients the elevation in systolic and diastolic pressure will amount to about 10 mm. of mercury. In patients who are predisposed to hypertension, the blood pressure will rise from 30 to 70 mm. of mercury. This often accounts for the high blood pressure seen when this group of patients is examined for the first time by an insurance company physician. In a brief period their pressures return to normal, and the finding is usually thought to be of no consequence. However, if these patients are carefully studied subsequently by the physician, the family history of hypertension will be found to be positive in well over 80 per cent of the cases. For this reason the careful recording of blood-pressure values by life insurance examiners, industrial and school physicians, in patients who would not ordinarily come under the physician's care becomes a matter of great importance. Here early changes may be noted at a time when effective preventive measures may be planned.

Various poisons have long been mentioned as leading factors in the development of hypertension. Lead has been known to exert a vasoconstricting effect on the arteries, but it is doubtful if this effect can be a continued one and account for a chronic hypertensive process. Tobacco may have some effect on angina and peripheral artery sclerosis, but it has not been shown to produce a chronic increase in the blood pressure. Alcohol likewise cannot be said to play a significant role in the increase in heart disease, at least not through the production of hypertension.

Finally, about all we can say in regard to the cause of essential hypertension today is that it follows a widespread vasoconstriction of the arterioles of the body, cause unknown, which increases the work of the heart, leading to hypertrophy and eventually to failure. A more rapid progression of these changes we refer to as malignant hypertension.

## SIGNS

When the chronic vasoconstriction of hypertension becomes established, clinically detectable changes in the heart and arteries are not long delayed. The late Richard Cabot summed up the situation to his classes briefly, "The findings in hypertensive heart disease consist of high blood pressure and a big heart." Hypertrophy of the left ventricle is first to occur, since it is this chamber that feels the strain of the abnormally high peripheral resistance. If vasoconstriction continues and increases, dilatation of the left side of the heart occurs with widening of the mitral ring, and the systolic murmur of relative mitral insufficiency is heard in the region of the apex.

Increase in the pulmonary blood pressure now follows. As the right ventricle receives the strain, it responds in similar fashion by an increase in its size. When it can no longer carry the burden, it in turn shows dilatation and signs of failure. While these changes are taking place in the heart and lungs, the aorta is receiving an increased amount of trauma at each systole. If viewed under the fluoroscope, a widened arch may be noted, although this change is not as marked as that observed when

syphilis is present. The elevated blood pressure is now reflected in the increase in the pitch of the aortic second sound. As the disease advances, degenerative changes appear in the aorta; small tears may occur, caused either by the direct impact of the blood column or by the twisting effect it exerts on the whole arch. Later, if these areas give way before the increased force of the blood column, dissecting aneurysms may form.

Long-continued strain on the peripheral arteries produces a thickening or sclerosis. The coronary arteries are so located that they cannot avoid the damaging effects of the column of blood delivered to them under such an increased pressure, and all too often rapidly progressive changes in these vessels lead to an early fatal issue, particularly if the picture is further complicated by the presence of diabetes.

### SYMPTOMS

The patient who has a well-established hypertension may have no symptoms whatsoever that would lead him to consult a physician, and many times the elevation of the blood pressure is first brought to light by a life insurance examination. The course of the disease from this time depends a great deal on the skill of the physician first consulted in explaining the nature of the condition to the patient and on the type of nervous system possessed by the patient who receives this information. In some patients a host of symptoms of psychoneurotic nature can be traced back to the day they first learned of the increase in blood pressure. To them this figure represents a definite disease, and their initial fright prompts them to travel from physician to physician, seeking a magic remedy for their only complaint, "blood pressure." In other patients, from the very onset, the hypertensive process may pursue a swift malignant course with widespread changes and many symptoms that are real, progressive and uncontrollable.

Dyspnea. Between these two extremes, there are a number of patients who show structural alterations of a slowly progressing type. The first symptoms to appear are usually of a cardiac nature; of these, increasing dyspnea on exertion is the most common. Observing this symptom as the hypertensive process advances, it will be seen to grow gradually worse; and even if the patient is overweight (which is usually the case), the dyspnea may be in excess of the amount noted on the previous examination. Dyspnea is the earliest sign of weakness of the left ventricle and, if uncontrolled by appropriate measures, will progress gradually or rapidly to orthopnea and other evidences of congestive cardiac failure.

If failure of the left ventricle occurs quite rapidly in patients with an established hypertension, a sudden attack of dyspnea may occur. This is known as acute paroxysmal dyspnea or "cardiac asthma." It comes on frequently at night when, during sleep, the patient slips into an unfavorable position. Some cardiac patients may be comfortable in one recumbent position and uncomfortable in another. There is a quick awakening with

an increase in the respiratory rate and a sense of suffocation. The spell may disappear with change in position, or it may become aggravated by the increased respiratory movements, which favor a greater venous return to an already overloaded heart. Pulmonary congestion increases, producing further reflex respiratory stimulation.<sup>14a</sup> The congestion that follows edema of the lungs places an additional burden on the circulation.

Pulmonary edema may come on rapidly during an attack of cardiac asthma. Râles appear, and these become more numerous and widespread as the spell progresses. A frothy, blood-tinged expectoration often follows an attack in some cases.

Cardiac asthma is a common symptom in patients who have had high blood pressure for some time with continued overstrain of the left ventricle. The sudden depletion of cardiac reserve following a coronary occlusion may precipitate an episode of this paroxysmal type of dyspnea. Cardiac asthma may also complicate the course of chronic nephritis; less often it may be secondary to an energetic right ventricle in mitral stenosis, suddenly pumping more blood into the lungs than is able to pass the narrowed mitral valve (see Case 15). Too great a volume of fluid intravenously,\* abdominal distention, overactivity, cough, constipation, fright, and nightmares, as well as faulty posture during sleep, are other factors usually blamed for precipitating attacks of paroxysmal dyspnea. The relationship between allergy and hypertension is discussed in Chapter 16.

**Heart Symptoms.** While the continued elevation of the blood pressure causes cardiac failure in most cases, intercurrent infections may add the deciding burden that precipitates cardiac breakdown. Often when the cause of failure is not apparent clinically, an extensive coronary involvement may be discovered at postmortem. In some cases anginal pain may have suggested the complication of coronary sclerosis, while in others the first intimation of the presence of coronary disease may be a sudden coronary occlusion.

Disturbances of cardiac rhythm frequently account for the palpitation complained of in many cases of hypertension. Premature beats are common. When there is a persisting total irregularity, auricular fibrillation is the usual cause. Paroxysms of tachycardia or flutter are rare but may occur. Advancing coronary disease, interfering with the circulation to the bundle, may produce varying degrees of heart block.

Nervous symptoms may precede or accompany these cardiac manifestations and are often so pronounced that they tend to obscure the picture. Vertigo, headache, insomnia, tinnitus, and inability to concentrate are common complaints of patients who have established hypertension. Nose bleeds occur in some instances and may precede a cerebral hemorrhage. In hypertension the peripheral circulation may be curtailed to the extent that symptoms are produced in the form of disturbances of sensation (parathesis) or pain on walking (claudication).

\* A warning against over-energetic postoperative treatment.

Visual symptoms (headaches, blurring of vision, amaurosis) may appear early in the course of the disease, and the patient will first consult



FIG. 116. Retinal changes in essential hypertension.

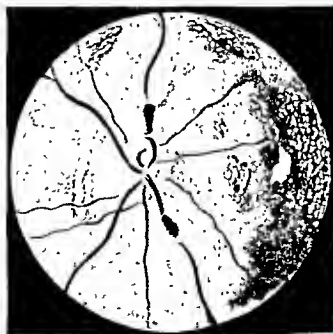


FIG. 117. Retinal changes in malignant hypertension.

an ophthalmologist, at which time the presence of essential hypertension will be revealed by an examination of the visual fields (Fig. 116). Experience in the use of the ophthalmoscope is essential in the treatment of hypertension, since changes in the eye grounds are common, and the



information gained by this examination is useful in diagnosis as well as in prognosis. A narrowing of the arteries of the retina, which may be the result of constriction or sclerosis, is first seen. If the change is marked, it usually means an advancing lesion. Many times the blood pressure of a patient may be normal when examined, in which event the retinal arteriosclerosis may be the only evidence on physical examination of a previously existing hypertension.

Malignant hypertension also leaves its stamp on the eye grounds, in the form of papilledema, retinal lesions, and advanced narrowing of the vessels (silver-wire arteries) (Fig. 117). These changes may be observed far in advance of the renal alterations that characterize the terminal stages of the disease.

## DIAGNOSIS

**Cardiac Hypertrophy.** It is necessary to demonstrate the presence of cardiac hypertrophy before a diagnosis of hypertensive heart disease can be made. This increase in heart size, even if the blood pressure happens to be normal at the time, should always suggest hypertension in the absence of other causes for enlargement. If closely questioned on these occasions, the patient will usually give a history of a previous elevation of the blood pressure, and often a later reading after circulatory improvement has taken place will show a higher level.

**Murmurs and Sounds.** In hypertension, systolic murmurs are usually heard over the cardiac apex and in the aortic area, while the second heart sound in the aortic area is accentuated. Rarely, when there is a marked degree of aortic dilatation, a functional diastolic murmur may be heard in this region. I have seen only two cases of functional aortic regurgitation, secondary to hypertension. Both came to autopsy, and syphilitic aortitis was proved to be absent in each instance. When left ventricular failure develops during the course of hypertension and the pulmonary circulation becomes engorged, the pulmonic second sound may increase until it equals or exceeds the aortic second sound in intensity.

If auricular fibrillation is absent, a gallop rhythm may also be heard accompanying the failing heart in hypertension (page 15). The third sound that makes up the gallop usually follows the second sound of the heart and is therefore protodiastolic. It should be distinguished from the normal third heart sound when the latter is present. This is easy as a rule, since third heart sounds occur in normal subjects with slow heart rates. When a gallop rhythm is heard in patients with hypertension, a block of one of the bundle branches should always be suspected. The asynchronous contraction of the ventricles that occurs in the presence of this lesion causes splitting of the first heart sound, usually best heard between the apex beat and the left sternal border.

**Pulsus Alternans.** When congestive failure complicates hypertensive

heart disease, another sign that should be searched for is *pulsus alternans* (page 407), for if present, this arrhythmia aids in establishing prognosis. Appearance of either *pulsus alternans* or gallop rhythm in the early stages of failure in hypertensive heart disease is usually indicative of a poor outlook.

Other organs in the body that are involved in the hypertensive process may furnish clues that may help to identify the type of cardiac damage, if the blood pressure happens to be low when the patient is first examined. Kidney lesions may be suspected in the presence of albumin, a low fixed specific gravity, casts, and nitrogen retention, although these signs, if they appear first with the onset of congestive failure, should not be viewed as conclusive evidence of renal damage. Transient paralysis, aphasia, as well as headaches, point to cerebral changes that may be the result of either angiospasm or cerebral hemorrhages.

Hypertension may be said to be present when the systolic blood pressure is persistently above 140 mm. of mercury or the diastolic above 90 mm. of mercury. However, many variations occur. When first seen, the blood pressure in most hypertensive subjects is already established at a higher level, the average reading being 170/100. An occasional patient will show a systolic reading as high as 300 mm. of mercury. Many retain the same blood pressure level for years and feel much worse when attempts are made to lower it. In the presence of heart failure or following a coronary occlusion, the blood pressure may drop to a normal level or lower. The cause of the cardiac hypertrophy is then obscured, and the examiner must turn to the history and the physical examination for further evidence. Often the diastolic level will not drop to the same extent and will remain well over 100 mm. of mercury. This is a valuable sign. On the whole, too much stress is placed on the blood pressure figure itself at the expense of the more significant features of the physical examination.

The characteristic alterations in the orthodiagram in hypertension are discussed in Chapter 1 (page 44), and the electrocardiographic changes in Chapter 24.

A careful physical examination including the usual laboratory tests will, in most cases, furnish all the data necessary for a diagnosis of hypertensive heart disease. The presence of cardiac enlargement without valvular disease establishes the diagnosis at once in the presence of elevation of the blood pressure. If the pressure is not elevated, careful attention should be given to the history in order to exclude patients with coronary disease who frequently exhibit cardiac enlargement. In these cases the eye grounds may contain the evidence necessary in making the differentiation. If the history is atypical and the eye grounds negative, it may be most difficult, if not impossible, to make the distinction without further observation. In some cases when congestive failure is successfully treated by appropriate therapy, the blood pressure may return to its previous high level, and this observation will often clear the diagnosis.

## PROGNOSIS

Accurate prognosis is most essential in this type of heart disease; and although there are wide variations, a few general rules may be stated. Usually the older the patient, the better the prognosis, since in younger patients the disease is more apt to run a malignant course. Patients who first develop hypertension in the fifties or sixties may show few untoward effects.

The blood pressure figure itself usually has little significance. However, if the diastolic pressure remains above 120, there is usually trouble ahead. The disease in these cases may take an abrupt malignant course with a quick termination. In any event, when a diastolic pressure of 120 mm. or over is discovered at each examination, the duration of life rarely exceeds two years.

**Better Prognosis in Women.** Women, in my experience, are able to withstand the effects of a high blood pressure exceedingly well for many years. Mild elevations of the systemic pressure that are seen at the time of the menopause may persist and cause little difficulty in later life. The course of hypertension in women is less apt to be complicated by coronary accidents.

**Complications.** Aside from the development of malignant hypertension with its rapidly fatal course, complications may at times arise in any case and determine the outcome. *Congestive cardiac failure* is the most common and terminates the disease in over half of the cases. Cerebral hemorrhages, coronary disease, and a progressing kidney lesion, in the order named, are the next most common terminal events in hypertension. Complications, therefore, arise mainly from the heart and the brain and not, as formerly believed, from the kidney.

The cardiac involvement secondary to hypertension is usually progressive, and as a rule the larger the heart, the poorer the prognosis. Gallop rhythm and pulsus alternans also point to a poor prognosis. When attacks of cardiac asthma complicate the picture, the duration of life is rarely over a year. The presence of angina makes prognosis difficult. The patient is always liable to sudden death, but with careful management may live a number of years.

The assessment of the renal lesion aids in prognosis, and in most cases a concentration test will give a good index of renal function. If there is fixation of the specific gravity in a young person with hypertension, the outlook is grave. Older patients may show slower progression of the kidney lesion. When uremic symptoms are added to the picture at any age, the prognosis is most serious.

## TREATMENT

In planning the management of any case of hypertensive heart disease, due consideration should always be given to the underlying cause or

dioxide to watermelon seeds when enthusiasm lifts them to the realm of "cures."

Ayman<sup>7</sup> has collected over 200 accounts of procedures and drugs that have been proposed for the treatment of high blood pressure. A detailed review of 35 of these showed that all laid claim to either partial or complete success. It is evident that the encouragement received with the remedy and the confidence the patient has in the physician go far in bringing the degree of relaxation necessary for symptomatic relief. In the early stages of some of the neurogenic types, this improvement may be long continued.

Buck points out the usefulness of treating cases of hypertension by the methods that have proved their value in the management of the psychoneuroses and recommends similar class instruction. This psychologic approach may be useful as a method in large city hospitals for providing the necessary information in regard to diet, exercise, relaxation, and mode of living to large groups who would otherwise receive no instruction in these necessary fundamentals.

### Drugs

**Nitrites.** Of the various drugs that have been recommended for essential hypertension, the nitrites appear to be the first thought of many practitioners. Consequently a few words regarding their place in the therapeutic program is in order. It is not good therapy to administer one of the nitrite group to be taken at stated intervals as soon as hypertension is diagnosed. While it is quite true that the nitrites under some circumstances are excellent in reducing arterial pressure, their action is fleeting, and frequently, if given to patients with advanced arteriosclerosis, they produce symptoms that are always annoying and at times may be actually dangerous. A sudden lowering of the blood pressure is likely to cause syncope in older people. Little is gained, because the blood pressure rises again in a short while following the use of the drug, and remains elevated until the next dose is taken. In the absence of symptoms, what benefit could the patient possibly derive from these short periods of blood pressure decline? The use of the nitrite group should, therefore, be confined to patients with angina pectoris and those showing vasospastic crises, and should always be governed by the need of the moment.

Nitrites produce vasodilatation because of their direct action on the smooth muscle of the vessel walls. They depress systolic pressure to a greater degree than the diastolic, and this suggests that their action on the smaller arterioles is less marked. A description of the various nitrite preparations in common use will be found on page 247.

Bismuth subnitrate has recently enjoyed a wide reputation that is chiefly based upon the belief that it is slowly absorbed from the gastrointestinal tract where it supplies a small quantity of nitrite gradually, thus sustaining its effect and overcoming this objection to nitrite therapy. In

the doses suggested by Stieglitz,<sup>356</sup> this remedy has not been successful in my hands.

The iodides have been advised in small doses in the treatment of essential hypertension and have continued to hold their place through the years. Some claim a vasodilating effect follows their use; others like their "alterative action." The majority of physicians who use the iodides in hypertension find them just as good and not as dangerous as the hundreds of newer remedies whose main action is to depress the blood-pressure level. When advocates of iodide therapy are overenthusiastic in their claims, I always suspect that the hypertension in the patient who shows such striking results is either complicated by syphilis or is secondary to thyrotoxicosis.

Sedatives are most useful in the treatment of some types of hypertension and have gained a reputation by their action on the accompanying nervous symptoms. They are invaluable in irritable and excitable patients in securing the rest and relaxation so necessary in successful management. In small doses, 0.15 to 0.30 Gm. ( $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  grain), every four hours, phenobarbital will exert a sedative effect rather than a hypnotic one, and its administration may be accompanied by a decrease in the blood-pressure level. Bromides may be continued to advantage combined with the elixir of phenobarbital in some cases. Chloral hydrate is a safe and effective sedative and in the usual dosage, 1.0 Gm. (15 grains), has no untoward effect on the heart.

Endocrine products have been advocated for the hypertension that accompanies the menopause.<sup>7</sup> Here again the effect may not be a direct one, since the fall of blood pressure may follow the relief of the annoying symptoms that accompany the condition. Other glandular extracts (liver, pancreas, or thyroid) have, as far my experience goes, no definite place in the management of hypertension.

**Other Drugs.** The remaining host of preparations described in the numerous pamphlets that increase the bulk of the daily mail have, as far as I know, not been proved to be of exceptional value in the management of essential hypertension. I mention in passing the sulfocyanates (this group may be actually dangerous), cucurbititrin, benzyl benzoate, adenosine, adenylic acid, acetyl choline, and histamine.

#### OTHER MEASURES

Physiotherapeutic methods in the treatment of essential hypertension appear to have their greatest value when combined with suitable rest, which explains the good reports that follow when they are used as a part of the regular regime of spa treatment. Diathermy and carbon dioxide baths are also popular adjuvants at the various resorts (Chapter 19).

Routine venesection is not to be encouraged as a beneficial therapeutic measure in hypertension, since the blood pressure very quickly returns to its original level when the blood volume is restored. However, when heart failure comes on with increase in the venous pressure, prompt venesection of 500 cc. is one of the most efficient methods of restoring cardiac balance.

The above measures directed toward relief of the symptoms that commonly arise in the course of essential hypertension constitute the treatment of the patient who has hypertensive heart disease which is asymptomatic. If no evidence of congestive failure exists in the absence of auricular fibrillation, digitalis should not be given. When this drug is needed, the presence of hypertension is no contraindication to its use. Many times there will be a rise in the blood pressure following the clinical improvement that accompanies digitalization, but this should never be regarded as a matter of any consequence. On the contrary, it shows the ability of the myocardium to restore the blood pressure to the customary level where, as the patient has demonstrated, greater efficiency may be attained. The subjective improvement observed in the patient generally confirms this opinion.

The increasing dyspnea of cardiac failure calls for prompt and complete digitalization. When congestive failure develops in hypertension, the measures are the same as those used when failure complicates other types of heart disease. These are fully discussed in Chapter 2.

Paroxysmal dyspnea or cardiac asthma calls for special mention. Prevention of the attacks is important and may be possible if attention is paid to the factors mentioned on page 74. A suitable bed (See Fig. 38) should be procured whenever possible so that the patient may not run the risk of slipping down into the unfavorable position that initiates a seizure. Sedatives should be prescribed to allay nervousness and to secure a full night's rest. After recovery from the initial attack, the patient should be digitalized. This will be found to control or greatly diminish the severity of the seizures for a time in some instances, although with increasing weakness of the left ventricle, the attacks recur. In many of these patients, the use of diuretics will again secure some temporary measure of relief. Theophylline is useful, while the administration of one of the organic mercurial group at regular weekly intervals may be helpful in preventing attacks, even in the absence of demonstrable edema (See Case 5). Renal function should be determined before this course of treatment is begun, and the existence of a possible obstruction to the urinary flow ruled out. In some cases the use of mercurial diuretics in preventing attacks of cardiac asthma in the absence of visible edema may be much more helpful than morphine, particularly when vomiting uniformly follows the use of the latter drug. Suitable limitation of fluid is necessary in these patients, but with routine diuretics, this need not be carried to the point where the patient is uncomfortable. Care should be taken when diuretics such as mercupurin are used not to insist on too drastic salt restriction. A slight readjustment may also be necessary in the daily maintenance dose of digitalis (page 113).

Angina pectoris and coronary occlusion not infrequently complicate the course of hypertensive heart disease. Their treatment is discussed in Chapters 7 and 8.

The increasing incidence of hypertension, its complicating lesions in heart, brain, and kidney and the futility of most medical efforts to influence its course permanently, once established, challenge the efforts of all inves-

tigators. It is natural that the surgeon should become interested in this unsolved problem and not at all surprising that he should choose as his points of attack the endocrine glands and the nerves that carry the constrictor impulses. The following brief summary of the surgeon's viewpoint in the treatment of hypertension is furnished by Dr. James Lehman.

### SURGICAL TREATMENT OF HYPERTENSION

Prior to 1925, the treatment of hypertension was entirely a medical problem. Since that time there has been increasing effort on the part of numerous surgeons to perfect an operation for amelioration of the symptoms of high blood pressure. These operations have been many and varied. In attempts to solve the problem, much needless surgery has been done, and, no doubt, is still being done. A number of theories have been advanced that attempt to explain the nature of hypertension, but so far there has not been a single one that satisfactorily answers all the perplexing problems of management. Consequently none of the operative procedures is entirely satisfactory in all cases. While time has shown the fallacies of many of the earlier reports concerning operative relief in hypertension, too much credence must not be placed in these suggestions, no matter how clear and logical they seem. It is an encouraging sign that during the past few years some agreement among surgeons has been developing as to the selection of the patient for operation and the type of operation to be performed.

Bitter criticism has been raised in some quarters against the use of surgery for high blood pressure, which is, after all, only a symptom, the cause of which is unknown. While not denying any of the arguments against surgery, much more valid proof has recently been obtained of the usefulness of surgery in arresting the progress of the disease and in producing an amelioration of the subjective symptoms. On the other hand, it must not be assumed that an operation will ever restore efficiency to an arteriosclerotic kidney nor elasticity to a hardened artery. However, if cases which are unresponsive to medical treatment are recognized early, surgery may find a real place in the therapy of hypertension.

No attempt will be made here to review the various operative procedures which have been employed in recent years by both American and European surgeons. While there is still no unanimity of opinion, the zone of action is narrowing to an area represented by the splanchnic nerves, the celiac ganglia, and the adrenal glands. The operative measures may be classified under three headings: (1) adrenalectomy, (2) rhizotomy, and (3) cellectomy.

**Adrenalectomy.** Acting on the theory that overactivity of the adrenals was the cause of hypertension, many surgeons have practiced adrenalectomy. The operation has been more popular in Europe than in this country. Encouraged by the reports of cures following the removal of adrenal tumors, surgeons wrongly interpreted this form of paroxysmal hypertension with the equally poorly understood essential hypertension. Crile

(1916) was probably the first surgeon in this country to perform unilateral adrenalectomy for the relief of hypertension. He soon discarded the operation after noting a return of symptoms at the end of one year. De Courcy more recently advised bilateral subtotal adrenalectomy and attempted to establish an analogy between hyperthyroidism and hypertension. He selects his cases early by tests of renal function and the fundus examination and performs his operations using the retroperitoneal approach through a "kidney" incision, in two stages with an interval of two to three months.<sup>27</sup> His statement that it is an accepted fact that hypertension is due to an increased adrenalin content of the blood is not in accord with present-day opinion. My experience with this operation, while small, shows that the results are not permanent, and the benefits, if any, are fleeting.

**Rhizotomy.** Adson and Heuer have been the chief proponents of rhizotomy. They performed section of the anterior roots of the spinal nerves from the sixth thoracic to the second lumbar and found that this procedure was followed by an appreciable drop in pressure in all cases. The pressure showed considerable variation with the position of the patient, such a drop occurring in the erect position that abdominal support became necessary. For this reason, rhizotomy has been sharply criticized as a debilitating operation which seriously cripples the patient.

Heuer used several criteria in the selection of patients for operation. He chose cases where the blood pressure was not "fixed" and demonstrated this flexibility pre-operatively by making observations: (1) after a period of bed rest, (2) after the administration of drugs such as amyl nitrite and sodium thiocyanate, (3) after the injection of colloidal sulfur, or acetyl-beta-methyl-choline. The stage of the disease was determined in the usual way by renal function tests, by ocular fundus examination, and by a cardiac survey. Heuer felt that the paralysis of the abdominal muscles was of little significance and was not particularly disabling. The best results with this procedure were obtained in cases of malignant hypertension.

**Celiectomy or Splanchnicectomy.** Today, the best results in the surgical treatment of hypertension follow one or both of these operations which are similar in theory as well as in technic. The nerves may be severed either above or below the diaphragm. Peet uses the intrathoracic approach, resects a small portion of the eleventh rib on each side, retracts the pleura, and sections the splanchnic nerves. The lower-most portion of the ganglionated sympathetic chain is also removed along with the rami communications from the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth intercostal nerves.

Peet places great reliance upon the experimental work of Goldblatt and his associates and believes that in many of the cases he has operated upon hypertension is due to ischemia of the kidneys from overstimulation of the vasoconstrictors of the blood vessels that supply these organs. He believes that his operation removes the "nervous clamp" from the kidneys and recommends the usual criteria in the selection of cases for surgery. He also believes that a good result is possible in patients under 50 years



of age, whose kidney function tests are still fairly good, where ocular changes are not too far advanced, and in whom medical treatment has been tried with no appreciable improvement. Some of his cases have shown amelioration of symptoms for as long as five years, and most of his patients have obtained symptomatic relief.

At the Mayo Clinic, the operation that is favored at the present time by Adson and his colleagues consists in bilateral section of the splanchnic nerves, the upper two lumbar ganglia, and the intervening sympathetic chain. The subdiaphragmatic-retroperitoneal approach is used.

These workers are in accord with Peet in proposing the neurogenic origin of hypertension. Overactivity of the vasoconstrictors, they theorize, is the cause of the symptoms, and their operation is performed to denervate completely the splanchnic vessels, the kidneys and adrenal glands.

In the careful selection of patients for operation, many tests are performed pre-operatively. Their observations show that many of the cases which seem best suited for operation give the poorest results postoperatively. There are also certain sequelae of this operation caused by the removal of the lumbar ganglia, i.e., loss of sweating in the lower extremities and increased skin temperature, that should be noted. The male usually becomes sterile, however, without the loss of libido. There is no change in the menses of the female nor in the child-bearing function.

After a long period of experimentation Crile has evolved the operation of cellectomy. Beginning many years ago with unilateral adrenalectomy, he changed later to bilateral adrenal denervation, while he now performs bilateral celiac ganglionectomy and denervation of the aortic plexus.

Based upon comparative anatomic studies, Crile states that

of highest significance is the role of the celiac ganglia and the celiac and the aortic plexuses, which are related to the control of the speed of the circulation of the blood. The control of the speed of the circulation of the blood includes the power to raise the blood pressure instantly. It includes the quick control of the capillary bed, control of the force of the heart beat. In other words, since the celiac ganglia, the celiac and the aortic plexuses, the splanchnic nerves, and the sympathetic ganglia in the adrenal medulla are the exclusive mechanisms for normal adaptive control of the blood pressure and the blood circulation, one would logically expect these to be the sole mechanisms which under pathologic activity would raise the blood pressure, day and night, for months and years, until the kidneys, the heart and blood vessels, and the brain are injured, that is, are so changed that heart failure, brain hemorrhage or kidney failure follow.

He therefore concludes

that celiac ganglionectomy and denervation of the aorta and of the adrenal gland could permanently affect only the physiologic

aspects of the disease and could not affect pathologic changes in the walls of the arterial tree; and that in cases that have passed



FIG. 118 Incision for celiac ganglionectomy.

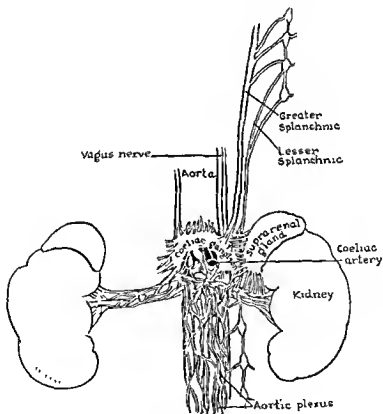


FIG. 119. The left celiac ganglion and its connections

the limit of cure, the progress of the disease may be slowed down or arrested. Since a free plexus of nerves connects the celiac ganglia, the adrenal medulla, and the entire sympathetic net-

ever, in the presence of arteriosclerosis, the sudden insufficiency of the cerebral circulation that resulted, produced symptoms; and, as I was told, symptoms had never been present before. This was the last time that I prescribed *nitroglycerine* to be taken routinely by the patient whose only departure from the normal standards of health was revealed by a blood-pressure reading. While the quickly acting members of the nitrite group are most valuable for the anginal seizures or the transient cerebral vascular spasms or crises that accompany hypertension, they are harmful if given routinely in haphazard fashion.

When this patient recovered from her syncopal attack and the first contact she had ever had with whiskey,\* I fell back on the iodides in order to secure more time to map out a different plan of attack on her blood pressure, which (fortunately) at this point had completely regained its former level of efficiency.

During the next few months, although the blood pressure showed little change, the patient was quite certain that she felt much better—at least much better than when she took the last medicine. A few months later she was disturbed by many “colds in the head” and “eruptions of the skin.” It looked like the end for the iodides, but by this time elaborate plans had been formulated. Sedative treatment could be given to allay the nervousness and lower the blood pressure; consequently a sodium bromide-phenobarbital mixture was prescribed after meals.

A few months later the patient's family complained that “Mamma is drowsy and queer.” A follow-up visit at this time revealed an element of truth in both assertions. The patient was in bed, and examination showed lack of ability to concentrate, a slow and indistinct speech, and a desire to sleep at all times. Although small doses of both sodium bromide and phenobarbital had been prescribed, often in older people untoward symptoms may appear. They are generally caused by the accumulation of the drugs in the body that follows faulty elimination by an arteriosclerotic kidney. All symptoms promptly disappeared when the sedative mixture was discontinued.

During the next few years, this trusting patient accompanied me through the mistletoe days, the benzyl benzoate outbreak, the watermelon seed epoch, and even cautiously sampled the thiocyanates. While she had many more annoying symptoms than were formerly present, was it not also true that the years were passing? She was now 80 years of age, and should expect “a few bad days now and then.”

A review of the findings at this advanced age showed a blood pressure that was still holding its former level of 220/100, no change in the heart size or the electrocardiogram, and no symptoms other than those explainable on the basis of the remedies administered. Profiting by this experience, it was suggested to the patient that she continue without medicine at least for a time unless symptoms developed. This was not a reasonable suggestion to a patient of her age who had been raised on the belief that

\* Formerly popular as first-aid measure in all emergencies, especially cardiac.

medicine of some kind is indicated if any abnormality whatsoever is discovered by the physician. "For every disease there must be a remedy." Consequently my last therapeutic sortie in her case was a prescription for capsules of appropriate size containing milk sugar. They were given with assurance and confidence and were accepted as representative of all the therapeutic knowledge of the day in the matter of hypertension.\* Immediate subjective improvement followed their use, and the patient's statement that she had not felt so well in years I had no reason to doubt, for in my own family circle at least I had come of age in the management of uncomplicated essential hypertension.

### HYPERTENSIVE CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE COMPLICATED BY CONGESTIVE CARDIAC FAILURE—AUTOPSY

**Case 47.** P. C., a colored laborer of 42, was admitted to the Philadelphia General Hospital on 5/24/36 complaining of shortness of breath and cough.

**HISTORY.** For the past few years dyspnea had been increasing in severity. Six months prior to admission, severe attacks of dyspnea had been present at night. These were occasionally followed by a blood-tinged expectoration. Edema was noted a month before admission, increasing gradually. No precordial pain had been present at any time. Chancre in 1909 and antisyphilitic treatment in the out-patient department from 1929 to 1936. No history of rheumatic fever.

**PHYSICAL EXAMINATION.** B.P. 140/105. Marked dyspnea and distention of the neck veins present. Heart enlarged to the left as far as the anterior axillary line. A musical systolic murmur was heard over the entire precordium with its greatest intensity at the apex. A systolic murmur was heard over the aortic area. The rhythm was interrupted by occasional premature contractions. There were râles at both lung bases. Shifting dulness was discovered in the abdomen, and the liver edge was palpable below the right costal margin (Fig. 120A).

**LABORATORY DATA.** Urine (24-hour specimen): specific gravity 1.011, trace of albumin. Blood count: hemoglobin 70 per cent (Sahli); R.B.C. 3,400,000; W.B.C. 13,200 Kahn negative.

**Roentgenogram:** decompensating (rheumatic) heart disease with pulmonary congestion.

**Electrocardiogram (Fig. 120B):** Occasional premature contractions, low voltage QRS, flat T-waves, and left axis deviation (myocardial disease).

**COURSE.** During the next two and one-half months the patient continued to lose ground rapidly. Gallop rhythm was present two weeks before death. Attacks of paroxysmal nocturnal dyspnea increased in frequency and the patient died in one of the seizures on 8/7/36.

**CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS.** A. Etiologic: Hypertension. B. Anatomic: Cardiac hypertrophy. Relative mitral insufficiency. C. Physiologic: Paroxysmal cardiac dyspnea. D. Functional Classification: Class 4. Therapeutic Classification: Class E.

**AUTOPSY.** (Fig. 120C.) Heart weight: 700 Gm. Scattered throughout the left ventricle and auricular myocardium were numerous white scars about 4 mm. in diameter with marked thinning of the myocardial wall at these points. The valves were normal and the coronary ostia fully patent. The aorta showed a few atheromatous plaques, but beginning 4 cm. above the aortic root were numerous small linear and stellate depressed intimal scars.

**Discussion.** The increase in the dyspnea over the course of a few years prior to death indicated a gradual diminution in the myocardial reserve. Six months before admission the occurrence of attacks of paroxysmal nocturnal dyspnea gave evidence that the situation was becoming an acute one.

\* As indeed they were, considering her physical findings.

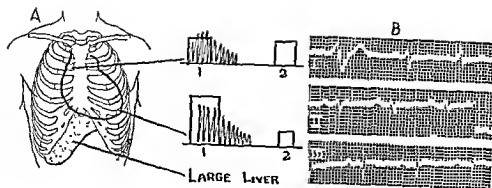


FIG. 120. A. Diagram of physical findings. B. The electrocardiogram. Occasional premature beats of ventricular origin (first beat lead I). The QRS voltage is low all leads. The T-waves are flat. Left axis deviation. C. Hypertensive cardiovascular disease. Cardiac hypertrophy and dilatation. A few atheromatous plaques may be seen in the first part of the aorta. (Autopsy No. 31,914. Philadelphia General Hospital.)

With the onset of congestion, the blood pressure dropped to 140/105. If the past history of the patient had not been known, some difficulty might have been encountered at this point in establishing the diagnosis of hypertensive cardiovascular disease. The age and the murmurs may have suggested rheumatic heart disease, and the history of syphilis in a negro who showed evidence of heart failure may have caused luetic heart disease to be considered as the etiology. However, there was no history of rheumatic infection, signs of mitral stenosis were absent, and the rhythm was regular. We know that the patient had syphilis for which he received prolonged and satisfactory treatment. It seemed unlikely that heart failure could be caused by syphilis in the face of this and in the absence of aortic regurgitation to explain the large heart.

The most suggestive sign was the level of the diastolic pressure on admission, even though the systolic level had dropped sufficiently to confuse the picture. The evidence of the previous existence of hypertension remained in the eye grounds and was reflected in the size of the heart. The murmurs could be explained also on the basis of relative mitral insufficiency following the increase in the size of the left ventricle and aortic dilatation secondary to the hypertensive process.

At autopsy the definite history of syphilis and the prolonged and adequate treatment that the patient had received over the course of some years led us to examine the first part of the aorta with care. There were only a few small healed scars visible in this region. These were considered to be unimportant clinically, since they neither interfered with valvular function nor caused blockage of the coronary arteries. The value of anti-syphilitic therapy in the prevention of the progress of aortitis is reflected in this instance (Fig. 120C).

When this patient entered the hospital, he was given a hypodermic injection of morphine and quickly digitalized. He received 0.2 Gm. (3 grains) of theophylline ethylene diamine after meals. At the end of the first week thoracentesis on the right side yielded 900 cc. of fluid. During one of the episodes of left ventricular failure that was attended by cyanosis and engorgement of the jugular veins, a venesection was performed and 500 cc. of blood removed.

#### MALIGNANT HYPERTENSION IN A GIRL OF 21—FAILURE OF MEDICAL REGIME

Case 48. Miss H. M., a single American clerk of 21, was first examined in September, 1934. The presence of hypertension had been noted a year before when she had a headache of three-days' duration. Since that time headaches recurred so frequently that six months later she was forced to give up her job. Lately vomiting accompanied the headaches and she lost 15 pounds in weight. The headaches usually were present in the morning and grew worse during the day. For a month before examination she had noticed progressing weakness, vertigo, blurring of vision and palpitation. The patient's father died of a stroke at 50. Her mother at 40 had essential hypertension.

PHYSICAL EXAMINATION. B.P. 240/130. Underweight. A slight exophthalmos was present. The skin was pale and dry. No thyroid enlargement. The eye grounds showed hyperemia and edema of both discs. Large hemorrhagic areas were present on both

retinae as well as sclerosis of the retinal arteries. The heart showed slight enlargement to the left, and the aortic second sound was attenuated.

**LABORATORY DATA.** Blood count was normal, the Wassermann negative. Blood urea: 27 mg. per 100 cc. The urine showed a trace of albumin and the phenolphthalein elimination in two hours was normal.

**CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS.** A. Etiologic: Hypertension (malignant) B. Anatomic: Cardiac enlargement. C. Physiologic: Normal sinus rhythm. D. Functional Classification: Class I. Therapeutic Classification: Class D.

**COURSE.** Rapidly down hill. The headaches increased, the renal lesion became apparent, and the patient, following a series of convulsions and a short period of coma, died seven months later in the Philadelphia General Hospital.

**Discussion.** The diagnosis of essential hypertension usually presents no difficulty. However, the distinction between malignant hypertension and chronic nephritis usually requires a longer period of study.

In this patient the absence of anemia, the extremely high level of both systolic and diastolic pressure, and the relatively good renal function present when first seen, were all points favoring the diagnosis of malignant hypertension. The picture presented by the eye grounds was likewise suggestive. There were no snow banks, hyperemia of the disc was present in contrast to the anemia generally seen in nephritis, and the retinal arteries reflected the changes that most commonly accompany hypertension.

Younger patients are more apt to develop malignant hypertension. Instances of this condition are reported in the literature before the age of puberty, although this patient is the youngest that I have seen.

The onset of the malignant phase of hypertension in this instance was typical. Severe headaches usually call attention to the eyes, and the discovery of the advanced changes in retina and disc on ophthalmoscopic examination clinches the diagnosis.

The extremely high systolic and diastolic pressures in these cases and the edema evident in the discs are signs that suggest the origin of the severe headaches. Edema of the brain and increase in intracranial pressure are thought to follow the inability of the arterioles in this region to constrict to the same degree as is shown by similar vessels in other parts of the body. The persisting elevation of the diastolic pressure likewise speeds the changes that usually are observed to follow a long continued hypertension, and the damage to the arterioles of the kidneys may be quickly reflected in the clinical picture. *Stupor, convulsions, and eventually uremia* develop in a very short time.

The medical management of the complications of malignant hypertension is difficult, and the relief obtained usually temporary. The patient whose course is as rapid as the one presented here is always best treated in the hospital.

Relief of the headache and vomiting is usually the first indication on admission. When the blood count is normal, the effect of venesection should be tried first. In some cases this procedure may bring considerable initial relief of the headache. When the symptom recurs, the therapy should be directed toward the fundamental cause of the condition. The edema of the

brain and increased intracranial pressure may be favorably influenced by intravenous injection of hypertonic sugar solutions. Glucose (1200 cc. of a 50 per cent solution) may be used but is apt to be followed by a secondary rise in pressure with recurrence of symptoms, since it can diffuse into the brain and spinal canal. Lately sucrose has been employed in the same concentration and amount and generally proves much more efficient, since its administration is not attended by a secondary rise in intracranial pressure.

Spinal puncture is a useful measure at times in the relief of the symptoms of hypertensive encephalopathy. It should be done with care and judgment, preferably in the hospital. If the initial pressure is found to be high after the needle enters the spinal canal, a slow withdrawal of sufficient cerebrospinal fluid is indicated to lower the pressure to normal. Spinal tap, however, is attended by some degree of risk in these cases, and the degree of relief it brings to the symptoms is by no means constant.

Blackfan and Hamilton<sup>29</sup> have successfully used magnesium sulfate in treating the complications of vomiting and convulsions in these cases. For the headache of malignant hypertension it is given by mouth or rectum (50 cc. of a 50 per cent solution), or, if convulsions develop, it can be administered intravenously (10 cc. of a 2 per cent solution per kilo of body weight). The action of the magnesium sulfate when given by mouth or by rectum is brought about by dehydration. The action when injected intravenously (or intramuscularly) depends upon the effect of the element magnesium upon the central nervous system. Excitability is abolished because of paralysis of motor nerve endings.

Sweating has no beneficial action on the cerebral symptoms of malignant hypertension and is no longer advised. In some cases it may even be harmful.

The nitrites are inefficient and powerless in combating a process of such severity as malignant hypertension, and usually show no appreciable effect on either the blood pressure or the symptoms.

#### EARLY MALIGNANT HYPERTENSION—BILATERAL CELIAC GANGLIONECTOMY

CASE 49. R. C., a chauffeur of 29, when first examined in December, 1938 complained of high blood pressure and nervousness.

HISTORY. Hypertension was discovered two years before first examination. Considerable initial improvement followed a medical regime, but during the following six months, although able to work, he felt very much worse. Vertigo, headaches, "biliousness," and finally dyspnea and palpitation developed. He lost ten pounds in weight.

PHYSICAL EXAMINATION. B.P. 240/130. Ophthalmoscopic examination revealed marked tortuosity and narrowing of retinal arterioles and a few scattered hemorrhages on the left retina. Both optic discs were hazy. The heart showed slight enlargement to the left. There was a systolic murmur heard over the mitral area and the aortic second sound was accentuated.

LABORATORY DATA. Basal metabolic rate; minus ten per cent. Blood count normal. Blood urea 38 mg per 100 cc. Urine showed a light cloud of albumin and hyaline casts.

Electrocardiogram (Fig. 121A) showed inversion of T-waves in lead 1.

CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS. A. Etiologic: Hypertension. (Malignant). B. Anatomic: Cardiac



enlargement. Relative mitral insufficiency. C. Physiologic: Normal sinus rhythm. D. Functional Classification: Class I. Therapeutic Classification: Class C.

COURSE. Celiac ganglionectomies were performed on January 15, 1939 and February 5, 1939.

Discussion. The problem presented by hypertension is indeed a grave one when we consider that 23 per cent of all deaths of persons over 50 are directly attributed to it.\* The internist has no specific therapy to offer in the management of this condition. At the present time he meets the indi-

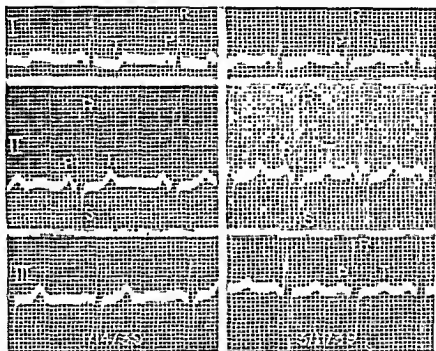


FIG. 121. The electrocardiogram taken before operation (1/14/39) shows diphasic T<sub>1</sub>. Following operation (3/11/39) the T-wave in lead I returned to normal.

cations as they arise and treats his patient by the use of carefully planned regimes, the details of which have been previously outlined. In many cases medical treatment meets all requirements. However, when the onset of a malignant course is evident, surgical measures should be considered, for in the presence of these rapidly progressing changes the medical man possesses no therapeutic weapon of value. The surgeon, on the other hand, by his attack on the sympathetic nerve pathways, reduces arterial tone at least in part of the vascular tree and in malignant hypertension has so far obtained results that are without parallel in medical treatment.

Following operation, the blood pressure of this patient was not restored to a normal level. Before operation the average readings were 240/120, while during the first year after operation, the average pressure was

\* Four times the cancer death rate.

180/100. However, the subjective relief was marked, and for this reason he was able to return to work. He had few headaches, less nervousness, and less exhaustion at the end of the day. Furthermore, this improvement in his condition was reflected in the ocular fundi. The spasm of vessels was less, and the retinitis disappeared. The discs cleared. The heart showed a decrease in size, and the T-waves of the electrocardiogram became upright (Fig. 121B). The albumin was less six months after operation, and a decided improvement in renal function was noted.

Before operation a marked response in the blood pressure followed immersion of the hand in ice water (page 298). After ganglionectomy this response was less marked but still in excess of normal.

While we must admit that perfection in the treatment of hypertension must await further studies, the relief that it is possible to bring to properly selected cases by the use of the surgical methods at our command today cannot be overlooked. Haphazard surgery in poorly selected cases that have not first been given the full benefit of a medical regime of treatment tends to discredit all operative measures. This is unfortunate when we consider that the surgeons have constructed their procedures along lines that conform to all the present-day concepts on the subject of hypertension.

## DISSECTING ANEURYSM OF THE AORTA

A rare, yet important, lesion that may complicate hypertension is partial rupture of the wall of the aorta with dissection of its coats, known as dissecting aneurysm. Four times (that I am aware of) this accident has occurred in patients under my care. In three of these cases that came to autopsy the diagnosis was missed, while the fourth was diagnosed correctly. If, in any type of heart disease, all possible happenings are constantly kept in mind, there is less likelihood of a diagnostic error; consequently it is worth-while to review the outstanding clinical features of this unusual accident.

Dissecting aneurysm occurs more frequently in males between 40 and 60 years of age who usually give a history of hypertension. The first tear in the aorta is most often a transverse one just above the aortic valve, through which the column of blood finds its way to the medial coat where it begins to dissect the vessel along the pathway of least resistance. It may re-enter the aorta at a lower point with the formation of a new channel of variable length (double-barrel aorta), or it may extend down to the bifurcation and cause compression of the iliacs. Half of the circumference of the aorta may be split to form this new channel, and any arteries arising from the vessel along the course of the dissection may be involved. Occasionally, the dissection travels toward the aortic orifice, in which event the coronary arteries are in danger of compression. If perforation takes place through the adventitia, sudden death follows with the escape of blood into the pericardial sac, the pleural cavity or the abdomen.

Dissecting aneurysm very rarely complicates syphilitic aortitis, occasionally takes its origin at the site of an atheromatous ulcer, but most frequently selects a spot where a previous medial degeneration has occurred. The exact nature of this medial change that Erdheim has designated "*medionecrosis aortae idiopathica cystica*" is unknown. Some claim that it is merely a degenerative process of old age, while others state that it is infectious in origin.

## SYMPTOMS

The symptoms attending dissecting aneurysm are sudden in onset and characteristic of the condition. Pain is always present. It is excruciating and persistent in spite of large doses of morphine. Some patients describe it as a "tearing" pain. Usually it is so severe and attended by so profound a degree of shock that consciousness is quickly lost. The pain usually centers about the front or back of the chest, but in some instances it may be felt in the abdomen, in which event the condition is quite often mistaken for the surgical emergency of perforation or embolism (page 483).

The direction taken by the dissecting column often determines the symptoms (see Fig. 157). Pressure on the coronary vessels may cause pain that cannot be distinguished from that of occlusion; leakage into the mediastinum may produce hoarseness, pressure on the renal arteries, anuria, while compression in the region of the iliac vessels gives rise to symptoms in the extremities. Dyspnea is generally present. A previous history of hypertension is nearly always obtainable; in fact, in spite of the shock and collapse, the blood pressure may be maintained at a high level. The pulse rate varies, but is generally increased at the time of the rupture, becoming more rapid until it is imperceptible in the presence of internal hemorrhage.

Usually death is sudden. The longest survival after the onset of pain in the cases I have observed was 48 hours. Longer periods have been reported in a recent excellent summary of 19 cases of dissecting aneurysm by Glendy, Castleman, and White.<sup>117</sup> One of their patients lived for 105 days after the formation of the dissecting aneurysm and died suddenly 12 hours after its rupture.

The roentgen-ray examination may suggest the diagnosis. In one case (see Fig. 32) the roentgen-ray study made on different days revealed a shadow in the left chest following the accumulation of blood in the pleural cavity. An increase in the prominence of the aortic knob may occur in other cases following the accident.

The electrocardiogram is valuable in ruling out the diagnosis of coronary occlusion. It will be negative unless blood flow through either coronary artery is blocked by the dissecting column of blood.

Coronary occlusion is the usual diagnosis made in these patients, because of the sudden onset, the severe pain, and (if the patient survives) the subsequent fever and leukocytosis. Aside from the electrocardiogram, the

points in the differential diagnosis favoring dissecting aneurysm are: (1) the tendency of the blood pressure to remain elevated in the presence of so serious a catastrophe, (2) the excruciating pain which reaches its peak at once, (3) the more widespread radiation of the pain, (4) the development of symptoms suggesting obstruction of the circulation at distant points, and (5) the absence of a previous history of anginal seizures.

Embolism must be considered in the differential diagnosis. The severity of the pain and the absence of any condition that might serve as a probable site of origin for an embolus are important points in drawing this distinction.

## TREATMENT

Morphine and rest constitute the only therapeutic measures of value when the presence of this condition is suspected. All unnecessary movements are to be avoided in order to delay final rupture of the aneurysm through the adventitial layer. If the rupture occurs back into the aortic lumen with the formation of a double aorta, long survival may be possible in some instances. The importance of rest in these rare cases until healing takes place is evident.

## ILLUSTRATIVE CASES

### HYPERTENSIVE CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE—DISSECTING ANEURYSM—AUTOPSY

**CASE 50.** A. R., a colored laborer of 44, was admitted to the Philadelphia General Hospital complaining of severe pain in the chest and abdomen.

**HISTORY.** The patient was well until a week before admission when he suddenly developed vertigo, which was followed at once by a severe "splitting" pain in the abdomen and chest lasting several hours. His right leg became numb following the seizure. A few days later there was recurrence of pain, and the patient was admitted to the hospital.

**PHYSICAL EXAMINATION.** Well-nourished negro, slight dyspnea. B.P. 190/130. Advanced arteriosclerotic changes in both fundi. Heart slightly enlarged to the left. The area of supracardiac dulness was increased. There were systolic murmurs over the aortic and mitral areas. Epigastric tenderness.

**LABORATORY DATA.** Wassermann negative. W.B.C. 16,000. The urine showed a light cloud of albumin but no casts.

**COURSE.** On the second hospital day, the patient complained of severe chest and abdominal pain and died suddenly.

**CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS.** A. Etiologic: Hypertension. B. Anatomic: Dissecting aneurysm. Slight cardiac enlargement. C. Physiologic: Normal sinus rhythm. D. Functional Classification: Class 4. Therapeutic Classification: Class E.

**AUTOPSY.** Heart weight: 450 Gm. The heart (Fig. 122) was moderately enlarged. The valve rings were the seat of mild arteriosclerotic change. The coronaries were slightly thickened. The aorta contained a few calcified plaques. Situated in the center of the posterior wall, just distal to the aortic ring, there was a match head-sized rupture. The media was split in its entirety involving the thoracic and abdominal segments to include the proximal 5 cm. of the right common iliac. The left renal artery was also involved in the process.

*HYPERTENSIVE CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE—DISSECTING ANEURYSM OF AORTA—SURVIVAL FOR FIVE MONTHS—AUTOPSY*

Case 51. A. S., an unemployed colored male of 60, was admitted to the Philadelphia General Hospital on 11/18/36 complaining of vertigo, weakness, and precordial pain.



FIG. 122. Dissecting aneurysm of aorta. Note split in media (marked by arrow). (Autopsy No. 30,376. Philadelphia General Hospital)

**HISTORY.** High blood pressure for many years. In 1931 he had a stroke but was able to be about again in a few months. There was weakness of the left arm and leg.

On 7/6/36 a sudden severe precordial pain appeared and lasted for two days. It was relieved by rest in bed and medicine but returned, although much less severe, on several subsequent occasions. Following one of the attacks the patient was admitted to the hospital.

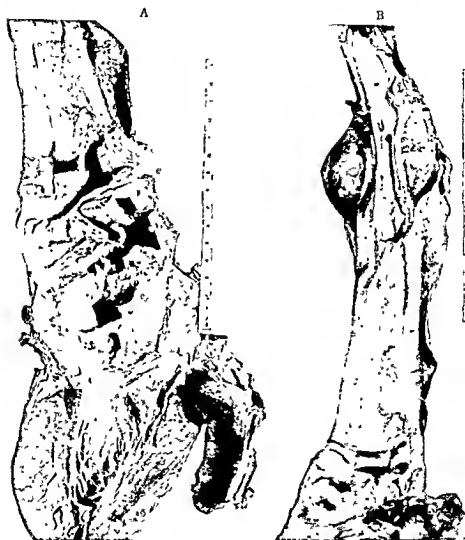


FIG. 123. Dissecting aneurysm of the aorta. A. Point of rupture above aortic valve. B. Double aorta. There were two separate channels as far as the bifurcation. (Autopsy No. 32,525. Philadelphia General Hospital.)

**PHYSICAL EXAMINATION.** Emaciated negro. Slight dyspnea. Old hemiplegia. B.P. 210/90. Pulse 84, totally irregular. Heart markedly enlarged to the left on percussion. Systolic murmurs were heard over the apex and aortic areas.

**LABORATORY DATA.** Roentgenogram: hypertrophy of the left ventricle and widening of both ascending and descending portions of the aorta but no definite evidence of aneurysm.

Electrocardiogram: Auricular fibrillation.

Wassermann negative.

CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS. A. Etiologic: Hypertension. B. Anatomic: Cardiac hypertrophy. Aortic dilatation. Coronary sclerosis. Coronary occlusion. C. Physiologic: Auricular fibrillation. Anginal syndrome. D. Functional Classification: Class 3. Therapeutic Classification: Class E.

COURSE. Many attacks of chest pain of the anginal type occurred from 12/10/36 to 12/15/36. The patient died suddenly during a severe seizure on 12/15/36.

AUTOPSY. Heart weight 420 Gm. Hypertrophy of the left ventricle with numerous fibrous scarred areas near the apex. There were atheromatous changes seen in the aorta and along the course of both coronary arteries (Fig. 123). About 3 cm. above the aortic cusp on the anterior aspect of the ascending branch there was an old break in the intima leading into a separate healed channel extending to the bifurcation (Fig. 123). This new lumen was entirely covered by an endothelial surface. The dissection was likewise seen to extend upward into the innominate artery, forming two separate lumina. The dissected pathway opened into the right common carotid artery.

## CONGENITAL HEART DISEASE

Congenital defects are rare and comprise less than 10 per cent of the cases in children's heart clinics and less than 2 per cent of all cardiac abnormalities seen in practice. If these defects were listed with all their possible combinations, this type of heart disease would immediately appear to be very complex. Rather than wade through the intricacies of diagnosis presented by such an array, it would seem easier to be satisfied with the plain diagnosis of congenital heart disease and allow the pathologists to worry about the difficulties of nomenclature and classification. However, during recent years, the application of the newer laboratory methods and diagnostic procedures\* to the problems of congenital heart disease permits a much sharper differentiation. While an exact anatomic diagnosis is still a clinical impossibility in every case, all patients should be carefully studied and the attempt made to record the defect that seems to be consistent with the physical signs.

Aside from increasing our efficiency in cardiac diagnosis, more exact knowledge of the structural defect is very useful in prognosis and in planning the patient's regime. For example, recently, in a limited number of cases, diagnosis of uncomplicated patent ductus arteriosus paved the way for the first successful ligation of this structure by Gross (page 339).

## ETIOLOGY

The chief cause of congenital heart disease is arrest of development and the earlier this occurs in embryonic life, the more serious will be the resulting defect. The critical time appears to be between the fifth and the eighth week just before the septa have come into apposition, and the torsion of the great vessels is complete. Interference in development during this period of growth will usually lead to a series of anatomic adjustments or rearrangements and multiple defects of a serious nature (*morbus caeruleus*). These are usually adaptations on the part of the growing embryo to permit survival in spite of grave alterations in the circulation.

Interference with development at a slightly later stage before the septa have closed (eighth week) produces localized septal defects (*cyanose tardive*), while factors influencing growth after septal closure result in minor anomalies.

Early writers pointed out the resemblance of many of these structural lesions to the hearts of animals and were content with the explanation of reversion to the primitive. Some examples of a two-chambered heart, which

\* Particularly fluoroscopy.



is similar to the heart of a fish, appear, and occasionally a three-chambered heart similar to that observed in the frog may be observed.

Why this faulty development in the embryo occurs has not been satisfactorily explained, but several theories have been advanced. Some believe that abnormal currents in the fetal blood stream are present and prevent the septa from growing across and closing off the chambers in normal fashion. Others believe that actual disease of fetal structures in the form of syphilis or tuberculosis is responsible. The factor of heredity must also be given some credence, since many cases live long enough to transmit the tendency. Influences on the mother during pregnancy, like fright, operations, etc., are favored by the laity in the explanation of these anomalies, as well as congenital defects of all types. Inherent weakness of the germ plasma because of consanguinity and alcoholism must not be overlooked when we are searching for a cause in individual instances. An early fetal endocarditis has been claimed to play a direct part in the formation of some of these defects, but considering the evidence this seems to be a rare cause.

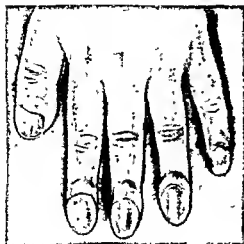
### SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

At birth a loud murmur may be heard over the precordium. If cyanosis is present, a diagnosis of congenital heart disease appears quite certain. However, it is rarely possible at such an early date to classify the abnormality correctly. If the child survives, the picture becomes more clear cut, and observations of the physical signs (thrills, murmurs, and cardiac hypertrophy) and study of the electrocardiogram and roentgenogram permit a more accurate diagnosis. This does not mean that the signs present at birth should not be noted. While a child's health record kept faithfully year by year is always a great asset in later life, it is particularly valuable if evidence of a cardiac defect is present at birth. Prolonged discussion concerning the etiology of the type of cardiac abnormality is then not so apt to arise when the murmur is heard for the first time after an attack of scarlet fever or other infectious disease of childhood. As a rule, murmurs heard in children under two years of age may be put down as congenital, since acquired lesions prior to this age are rare.

Cyanosis may or may not be present in congenital heart disease. Large defects in the septum allowing considerable unaerated blood from the right side of the heart to mix with arterial blood on the left side produce cyanosis. Since pressure is usually greater on the left side of the heart, in small defects the direction of the flow will be from the left to the right. Under special conditions, however, when the pressure in the pulmonary circuit becomes higher, the flow may be from the right to the left, for example, in pneumonia, after left ventricular heart failure, or severe exertion. This reversal of flow through the defect may cause a transient cyanosis. In some congenital lesions where there is an interference with the entry of blood into the lungs (pulmonary stenosis), this additional factor contributes to

the cyanosis. Cyanosis appears when the reduced hemoglobin exceeds the threshold value of 6.7 volumes per cent.

Patients who have cyanosis soon develop clubbing of the fingers and toes (Fig. 124). This is known as hypertrophic pulmonary osteoarthropathy (Marie, 1891). While long recognized as an important sign in congenital heart disease, it also occurs in subacute bacterial endocarditis and chronic suppurative conditions of the lung. Infection plus obstruction to venous return seem, in most cases, to be the causative factors in initiating this hyperplastic process in the periosteum. In congenital heart disease the clubbing of the fingers is present in direct proportion to the degree of cyanosis.



Polycythemia accompanies cyanosis and explains some of the symptoms commonly encountered in congenital heart disease. When cerebral blood channels become clogged by the excess number of red blood corpuscles, the patient may complain of headache and vertigo. Syncope, convulsions, and even paralysis may follow when the degree of cyanosis and secondary polycythemia is extreme. The latter symptoms are most apt to accompany a diminishing reserve and a secondary slowing of the cerebral circulation.

Polycythemia results from an overactivity of the blood-forming

sites in their attempt to compensate for deficient oxygenation of the tissues. The number of red blood cells in some cases may be increased to 12,000,000 per cubic mm. The total blood volume and blood viscosity are also increased in these patients. A stunted growth, as well as abnormal cerebral development, is not an unusual sequel in the presence of these marked circulatory defects.

Symptoms of congestive cardiac failure may appear and complicate congenital heart disease at any time. The incidence of pulmonary tuberculosis is also high. All degrees of dyspnea may accompany congenital heart lesions, depending on the severity of the defect, the amount of cyanosis

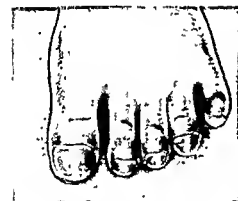


FIG. 124. Clubbing of the fingers and toes

present, and the activity of the patient. In some defects paroxysms of dyspnea may follow exertion because of a temporary increase in the extent of the venous shunt.

## CLINICAL CLASSIFICATION OF CONGENITAL CARDIAC DEFECTS

Since a variety of combinations of lesions is possible, most classifications of congenital cardiac defects are lengthy and intricate. There is little to be gained by attempting to remember all the types, for even the more common ones are rare in the experience of any physician. From the clinical standpoint it is sufficient to remember that these lesions may be conveniently grouped according to the presence or absence of cyanosis. The congenital defect may offer a simple mechanical obstruction to the blood flow, but no communication may exist between the pulmonary and systemic circulations. Under these circumstances there is no cause for cyanosis. In the next group defects in the cardiac or aortic septa may be present, but as long as the pressure remains higher in the systemic circuit, blood passes from left to right and no cyanosis occurs. If, however, the pressure is raised on the right side, cyanosis appears (cyanose tardive). In the last group of cases, a localized septal defect may be complicated by other anomalies which tend to raise the pressure on the venous side, or one or more of the cardiovascular septa may be absent, or the great trunks may be transposed. A venous-arterial shunt results in the development of permanent capillary changes and cyanosis. Some of these cases may show a mechanical obstruction to the return of venous blood to the right heart, which will cause a slowing of the capillary flow, and cyanosis will result from stasis and increased de-oxygenation at the periphery.

When attempting to demonstrate that cyanosis in children may not always have a cardiac origin I depend on the story of Dr. J. H. Means of the "negro mammy" who refused to alter her technic and use a thermometer to test the temperature of the white child's bath. "Ah can tell by de chile," said she. "If de water am too hot de chile he turn red; if de water am too cold de chile turn blue."

Based on the above considerations, Abbott<sup>1</sup> proposes the following classification for cardiac defects. The entities marked with an asterisk I have encountered in practice, and consequently I am able to summarize their outstanding features in the following pages.

TABLE VIII  
ABBOTT'S CLASSIFICATION OF CARDIAC DEFECTS\*

I. ACYANOTIC GROUP

(No abnormal communications between the two circulations.)

Pericardial Defects.

Ectopia cordis

- \* Congenital idiopathic hypertrophy.
- Congenital aortic and mitral stenosis.
- \* Bicuspid aortic and pulmonary valves.
- \* Supernumerary aortic and pulmonary cusps.
- Double A-V orifices.
- \* Coarctation of the aorta of adult type.
- Pulmonary dilatation.
- Hypoplasia of aorta.
- \* Double and right aortic arch.
- Left coronary from pulmonary artery.
- Congenital arteriovenous aneurysm.
- \* Dextrocardia.

II. CASES OF ARTERIOVENOUS SHUNT WITH POSSIBLE TERMINAL OR TRANSIENT REVERSAL OF FLOW (CYANOSE TARDIVE)

- \* Patent ductus arteriosus.
- \* Defects in interauricular septum.
  - Patent foramen ovale, defects in upper and lower parts of the interauricular septum.
  - Defects in aortic septum.
  - Congenital aneurysm, sinus of Valsalva.
  - Communications between the aorta and pulmonary artery.
- \* Defects in the interventricular septum.
  - (Maladie of Roger.)

III. CYANOTIC GROUP. CASES OF VENO-ARTERIAL SHUNT (MORBUS COERULEUS)

- A. Right sided valvular lesions. Fetal passages closed. Stasis and increased de-oxygenation in capillaries.
  - 1. Pulmonary stenosis with closed septa.
  - 2. Congenital tricuspid stenosis with closed septa
- B. Cases of permanent venous-arterial shunt.
  - 1. *Moderate cyanosis*
    - \* Pulmonary stenosis with patent foramen ovale.
    - Complete absence of interventricular septum (Cor biatriatum triloculare).
    - Common auriculo-ventricular ostium.
  - 2. *Marked cyanosis*
    - \* Pulmonary stenosis, interventricular septal defect, dextroposition of the aorta and right ventricular hypertrophy (tetralogy of Fallot).
    - \* Pulmonary atresia with defect of ventricular septum and dextroposition of aorta.
    - Cor biloculare with transposition of great trunks.
  - 3. *Extreme cyanosis*
    - Transposition of great trunks with closed ventricular septum, ductus arteriosus and patent foramen ovale.
    - Pulmonary atresia with closed interventricular septum, ductus arteriosus, and foramen ovale patent.
    - Tricuspid atresia.
    - Cor biloculare.
    - Mitral atresia.
    - Aortic atresia.

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## CONGENITAL IDIOPATHIC HYPERTROPHY

Hypertrophy of the heart at birth in the absence of any intra- or extra-cardiac etiological factor. More frequent in males. Survival is generally six months to a year, rarely longer.

**Symptoms.** Usually pallor, dyspnea, and cyanosis. The course is downhill. Death may occur suddenly.

**Signs.** Cardiac enlargement in all diameters (Fig. 125). A systolic murmur may be present.

**Roentgenogram.** Characteristic (Fig. 125).

**Electrocardiogram.** Of little value unless there are associated defects.



FIG. 125. Roentgenogram of a one-month-old infant. Note marked cardiac hypertrophy. Autopsy showed von Gierke's glycogen-storage disease.

**Present-day Views.** The discovery of other causes for congenital hypertrophy is decreasing the number of cases labelled "idiopathic." In 1929 von Gierke's glycogen-storage disease (cardiomegaly glycogenica) was described. Deposition of large amounts of glycogen in the heart as well as in other organs (liver, kidneys, brain) occurs. Anterior-pituitary dysfunction and consequent defect in the glycogen-splitting ferment has been advanced by some investigators as a cause for this rare disease which represents a persistence of the conditions that characterize fetal metabolism. Glycogen can be readily demonstrated in the organs by the use of Best's carmine stain.

**Treatment.** At present there is no treatment known to control this perversion of metabolism that results in structural changes in so many organs.

## BICUSPID AORTIC AND PULMONIC VALVES. SUPERNUMERARY PULMONIC CUSPS



FIG. 126. A. Bicuspid aortic valve. Secondary bacterial endocarditis, ulceration and perforation. This patient, a white male of 46, developed aortic regurgitation while under observation in the hospital. This was followed immediately by congestive cardiac failure. Death occurred five days later. The clinical diagnosis was syphilitic cardiovascular disease, although the Wassermann was negative. (Autopsy No. 24773, Philadelphia General Hospital.)



FIG. 126. B. Bicuspid aortic valve. In this case the aortic valve was the seat of extensive deposits of calcium. A terminal subacute bacterial endocarditis is seen. (Autopsy No. 33661, Philadelphia General Hospital.)



FIG. 126. C. Supernumerary pulmonary cusps.

1. Bicuspid Aortic Valve. This defect per se does not produce any signs or symptoms. However, it is not without significance clinically since these valves very frequently become the seat of sclerotic change, subacute bacterial endocarditis or both (Figs. 126A and 126B). In some of these cases the aorta immediately above the valvular defect may show dilatation, dissection, and secondary rupture.

2. Supernumerary cusps are more frequently encountered at the pulmonary orifice where they are not often the seat of invasion and consequently are of little clinical significance. A quadricuspid aortic valve is of more importance owing to the likelihood of the development of subacute bacterial endocarditis.

## CONGENITAL DEXTROCARDIA

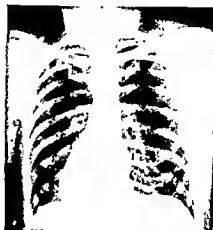
1. True dextrocardia (*situs inversus*). The heart is on the right side, and the other viscera are likewise transposed.

2. Dextrocardia without transposition of the other viscera is rare. Its association with other anomalies generally determines the prognosis in each instance.

## Clinical Diagnosis

Possible if palpation and percussion routinely practiced to the right as well as to the left of the sternum.

A



B



All waves in lead 1 are reversed in direction. Note that lead 3 is equivalent to lead 2, and 2 to 3.

FIG. 127. A. Congenital dextrocardia B. Electrocardiogram of patient who had congenital dextrocardia and acquired mitral stenosis (see Fig. 27).

Dextrocardia is unimportant if no other cardiac defects co-exist. It does not shorten life. There are no symptoms.

**INTERVENTRICULAR SEPTAL DEFECT (ROGER'S DISEASE)**

**Usual Site.** High up in the fibrous part of the septum (See Fig. 132).

**Direction of Blood Flow.** From left to right. Reversal of flow may take place during terminal stages with cyanosis.

**Heart.** Enlargement may be present or absent. Murmur is loud, harsh, and systolic in time. Point of maximum intensity is the third or fourth intercostal space close to the sternum. A thrill is palpable over this area.

**Electrocardiogram.** In rare cases the defect involves the conduction system and causes heart block (page 343).

**Prognosis.** Depends on associated defects and heart size. The danger is subacute bacterial endocarditis (Case 87). Interventricular septal defect is one component of Fallot's tetralogy (page 347).

**Note:** If the coronary artery supplying the interventricular septum becomes occluded in later life and the infarct softens and ruptures, an acquired interventricular septal defect may appear. It is usually small and unimportant but may produce physical signs similar to the congenital type

**COARCTATION OF AORTA**

**Types.** 1. Infantile. Narrowing of the isthmus of the aorta between the left subclavian and the ductus arteriosus. (Rare).

2. Adult. Narrowing of the aorta at the site of the ductus arteriosus. (Common type.)

**Symptoms.** Variable, often none. There may be intermittent claudication in the absence of demonstrable arterial disease.

**Cardiac Signs.** Hypertrophy. Followed at times by signs of failure.

**Electrocardiogram.** Not characteristic.

**Diagnosis.** Not difficult if the possibility is kept in mind and the characteristic features are sought.

**Vascular Signs**

Hypertension in upper extremities.

Decrease in blood pressure in lower extremities. Collateral circulation occurs through anastomoses of intercostal mammary and epigastric arteries and through dilated intercostal vessels (Fig. 128C).



Tortuous or pulsating arteries may be seen or felt under the skin, in posterior wall of the thorax around the scapula or in the anterior abdominal wall.

Thrills and murmurs may appear along the course of these vessels.

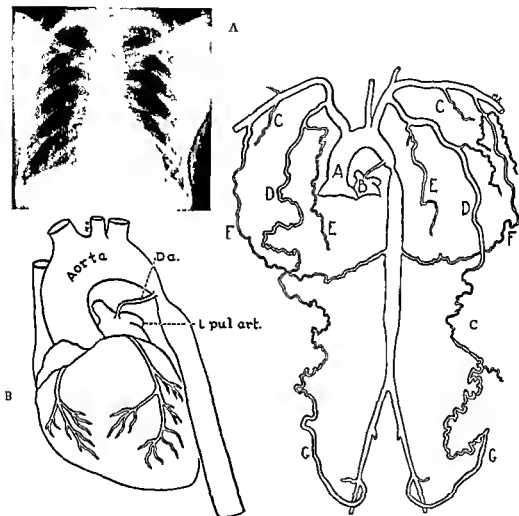


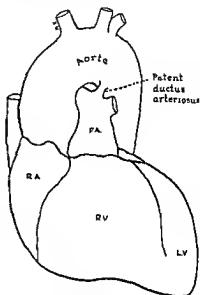
FIG. 128. A. Roentgenogram in coarctation of the aorta. Characteristic "scalloping" of the inferior margins of the ribs is seen. This is caused by erosion of bone by dilated intercostal arteries (Courtesy of Dr Paul A. Bishop.) B. Drawing of coarctation of the aorta of the adult type. Note marked narrowing of the aorta just below point of insertion of ductus arteriosus C. Collateral circulation in a case of coarctation of the aorta. (A. Aorta, B. Pulmonary artery, C. Subcapular artery, D. Internal mammary artery, E. Thyroid artery, F. Intercostal artery, G. Epigastric artery.)

### PATENT DUCTUS ARTERIOSUS (Commonest congenital defect)

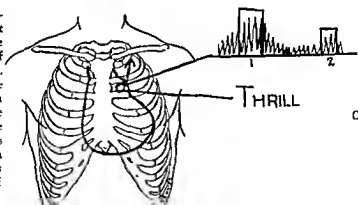
**Etiology.** The ductus may remain open to compensate for the other defect (coarctation), consequently it is less often found uncomplicated.

**Direction of Flow.** Pressure in the aorta is higher, therefore the flow is from the aorta to the pulmonary artery (arteriovenous shunt).

**Symptoms.** Usually none.



**FIG. 129.** A Roentgenogram in patent ductus arteriosus. Note the great dilatation of the conus pulmonalis. This is more extreme than that noted in mitral stenosis. Some enlargement of the heart to the left is also seen. B, Diagram showing patent ductus arteriosus. C, Chart of physical findings.



#### SIGNS

Continuous murmur and thrill at the second left interspace near the sternum.

The heart shadow in marked cases shows enlargement of the pulmonary artery, and hypertrophy of all chambers of the heart may be present.

Increased pulse pressure and the peripheral signs may be present as in aortic regurgitation. In the case of patent ductus arteriosus, the regurgitant stream goes into the pulmonary artery.

**Prognosis.** Depends upon the size of the communication. Surgical ligation is possible in selected (uncomplicated) cases (page 339).

In fetal life the blood is short-circuited around the lungs from the pulmonary artery to the aorta through the ductus arteriosus (Fig. 129B). When the lungs expand after birth, the ductus normally closes and becomes atrophic. If it remains open, the blood flow through this structure is reversed

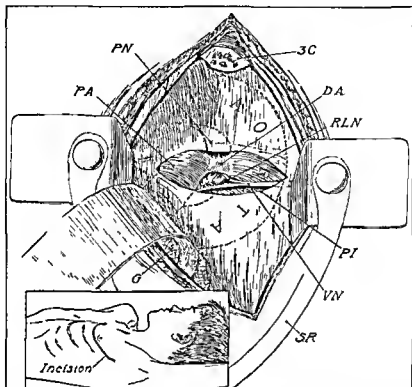


FIG. 130. Sketch of operative exposure of the ductus which was 11 mm. in diameter. Insert shows position of the patient with the left arm drawn up along the head and with incision coursing just beneath the breast. Thorax entered through the third interspace. Third cartilage cut to allow upward retraction of ribs. The left lung is held down inferiorly with a gauze pack and malleable retractor. Positions of aorta and pulmonary artery indicated by dotted lines. When the pleural covering of the mediastinum was incised, a direct view of the aortic arch, pulmonary artery, and ductus was obtained, (3C). Cut end of third costal cartilage. DA: Ductus arteriosus G Gauze pack over collapsed lung. PA: Pulmonary artery. PI: Pleural incision. PN: Phrenic nerve, RLN: Recurrent laryngeal nerve. SR: Self-retaining retractor. VN Vagus nerve.

since the pressure in the aorta is greater than in the pulmonary artery. If the passageway is large, the effect on the circulation is the same as that of any other arteriovenous aneurysm or shunt. About two-thirds of the patients who have a patent ductus arteriosus show an associated anomaly, but in one-third of the cases the patent ductus exists as the only defect. Recently the latter group has assumed considerable importance, since Gross has demonstrated that this arteriovenous communication can be successfully ligated (Fig. 130).

While in some instances, uncomplicated patent ductus arteriosus may be compatible with a normal life, in Abbott's series of 92 patients showing this defect, 28 died of subacute bacterial endocarditis, 24 of cardiac decompensation, 16 of sudden heart failure, and two of sudden rupture of the ductus. The average age at death was 24 years. Consequently the reason for employing surgical measures in these selected instances is to improve a most uncertain future. The patient who has an uncomplicated patent ductus arteriosus faces the danger of developing subacute bacterial endocarditis or endarteritis at any time. If this complication is avoided, the possibility remains that the shunt may increase in size and cause cardiac hypertrophy and subsequent failure. In a few cases the patent ductus may dilate and become thin-walled, in which event the danger of rupture is not negligible. These ever-present threats are eliminated by ligation.

Before recommending operation, the presence of associated defects, such as aortic stenosis or coarctation, stenosis or atresia of the pulmonary artery, or the complication of bacterial endocarditis should be ruled out. Pulmonary stenosis may offer some difficulty in the differential diagnosis, although the presence of a loud pulmonic second sound in cases of patent ductus and its absence in disease of the valve is an important point in drawing the distinction. In pulmonary stenosis, a right axis deviation appears in the electrocardiogram, while cardiac hypertrophy and cyanosis are more apt to be present. Associated anomalies like septal defect or a mitral stenosis, if slight, are not contraindications to operation, for as Gross points out, some improvement may follow if one defect is corrected. Vegetations of a subacute bacterial endocarditis present near the opening of the ductus arteriosus may be dislodged at the time of the operation, consequently their presence should be regarded as a complication.

In some cases where patent ductus arteriosus is the single lesion, spontaneous closure in later life may take place. If the findings are at all suggestive of this occurrence, operation should not be considered. In the absence of cardiac enlargement in patients who have a normal diastolic pressure and only a slight fulness in the region of the pulmonary artery on fluoroscopy, operation likewise has little to offer. When the heart is increasing in size and the physical findings are becoming more pronounced as the child grows older, operation is indicated.

#### SUMMARY OF CRITERIA FOR OPERATION (GROSS)

1. Presence of machinery murmur in pulmonary area, accompanied by increase of P<sub>2</sub>, most intense in the same area.
  2. Congestion of the lung fields in the roentgenogram.
  3. Prominent pulmonary artery in roentgenogram.
  4. Roentgenologic evidence of cardiac enlargement, particularly in the region of the left ventricle.
  5. Systolic blood pressure normal with a lowered diastolic level.
- The operation recommended and successfully carried out by Gross

exposes the ductus from the left side. The pleural cavity is entered, the lung collapsed, and the structures in this manner adequately exposed (Fig. 130). Gross reports little postoperative reaction, no important postoperative complications and no mortality in his first four cases. In each patient following operation the thrill disappeared, and the diastolic pressure rose to a normal level. In two instances the transverse cardiac diameter decreased, and one undernourished child gained nine pounds following ligation. After the procedure each child returned to school with a much improved circulation.

#### INTERAURICULAR SEPTAL DEFECTS

Entire absence of auricular septum may occur but is very rare (cor triloculare biventriculare) (page 343).

Persistent ostium primum follows arrested development of septum primum and is seen in the lowest part of the interauricular septum (Fig. 131).

*Patent foramen ovale is more frequently encountered. A valve-like opening is seen in 25 per cent of autopsies but is unimportant. When the foramen ovale remains widely open because of a defect in the ostium secundum, it is significant. This defect often accompanies persistent ostium primum.*

If not associated with other defects, there may be no signs or symptoms. Subacute bacterial endocarditis is rare in this region, but paradoxical embolism may occur. Thrombi from veins passing through the interauricular septal defect tend to lodge in the systemic circulation. Emboli may also go from the left auricle to the lung through this septal opening.

Case 52 (Fig. 131). A poorly nourished white female baby six months of age was admitted to the Philadelphia General Hospital for bronchopneumonia. Examination of the heart was entirely negative. Death occurred on the eleventh hospital day following the complication of acute otitis media. Cyanosis was present shortly before death.

Autopsy showed interauricular septal defect as the only congenital anomaly. Death was caused by bronchopneumonia, acute otitis and sepsis.



FIG. 131. Interauricular septal defect. (Autopsy No. 24,099. Philadelphia General Hospital.)

PATENT FORAMEN OVALE. DEFECTS IN INTERVENTRICULAR SEPTUM.  
AUTOPSY.

**Case 53.** An emaciated colored female child of four was admitted to the Philadelphia General Hospital complaining of shortness of breath and cough of four-months' duration.

**PHYSICAL EXAMINATION** showed precordial bulging, precordial thrill over the third left interspace, and a loud rough systolic murmur in the same region. The liver was two fingers' breadth below the costal margin. Wassermann negative.

**AUTOPSY.** Cardiac hypertrophy. Patent foramen ovale. Three separate openings between the left and right ventricles were discovered in the upper portion of the septum (Fig. 132). No other defects.



FIG. 132. Interventricular septal defects. (Autopsy No. 22,164. Philadelphia General Hospital.)

## ILLUSTRATIVE CASES

COMPLETE ABSENCE OF INTERAURICULAR SEPTUM AND OF THE MEMBRANOUS  
 PORTION OF THE INTERVENTRICULAR SEPTUM—CONGENITAL HEART  
 BLOCK—AUTOPSY<sup>201, 206</sup>

**Case 54.** *An infant boy, age six hours, the sixth child of a woman, age 28, was admitted to the Woman's College Hospital on May 6, 1932. The father and mother and the other children were free of congenital defects. The mother's prenatal period was entirely uneventful, and the delivery was normal. The Wassermann reaction of the mother's blood was negative.*

On admission the infant was well developed and well nourished and was apparently a full-term baby. No defects were noted. The weight was eight pounds (3,630 Gm.). There was intense cyanosis of the body generally and of the lips, ears, and nails especially. Examination of the lungs showed impaired resonance at the left apex posteriorly. The breath sounds were harsh over both lung fields, and there were many crepitant râles throughout. Substernal inspiratory retraction was present. The left border of the heart was 7 cm. from the midsternal line in the fourth interspace. The right border was 2.5 cm. from the midsternal line in the fourth interspace. The first sound was obscured by a blowing systolic murmur, and the second sound was weak. The murmur was audible over the entire chest, but the center of intensity was in the second interspace at the left of the sternum. The rate of the heart beat was 40 per minute. There were no thrills. The liver and spleen were not palpable, and the rest of the examination was negative.

The child was taken to the heart station of the hospital where electrocardiograms were made at intervals for the next few hours. All tracings showed complete heart block, with the ventricular rate of 50, the auricular rate of 100, and low voltage (Fig. 133B). Oxygen was administered with slight improvement in the cyanosis. The electrocardiogram was not altered.

The child was taken back to the ward and kept in an oxygen tent. A roentgenogram of the chest (Fig. 133A) showed the heart shadow to be very large in all diameters. The child died 18 hours after its birth.

**DIAGNOSIS.** A. Etiologic: Congenital defect. B. Anatomic: Cardiac hypertrophy. Interventricular septal defect. C. Physiologic: Complete heart block. D. Functional Classification: Class 4.

**AUTOPSY.** The main defect of the heart was the almost complete absence of the interauricular septum and the membranous portion of the interventricular septum. The coronary veins emptied separately into the middle of the posterior wall of the common auricle. The venae cavae had a common opening. The mitral and tricuspid valves were completely formed and were attached medially to the upper edge of the interventricular septum. The aorta and pulmonary artery had approximately normal relationship.

**MICROSCOPICALLY** it was observed by means of serial sections that there was practically complete absence of the conduction bundle between the common auricle and the ventricles. The defect had completely severed the auriculoventricular node from the auriculoventricular bundle. The bundle of His and the left bundle-branch were well developed, but a definite right bundle-branch could not be found, although there was a suggestion of one.

**Discussion.** In this case we have an example of a three-chambered heart with one auricle and two ventricles (*cor triloculare biventriculosum*). Other cases of heart block of congenital origin associated with this anomaly have not been reported.

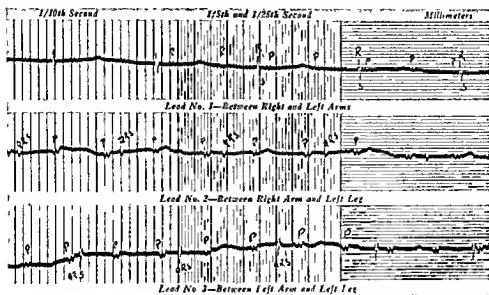
A complete block of the contraction impulse from the auricle occurred in the upper third of the interventricular septum at the site of the defect.

This anatomic separation was shown to be of developmental and not of inflammatory origin by serial sections. The bundle of His was well formed but was disconnected from the auriculoventricular node in the region of the defect.

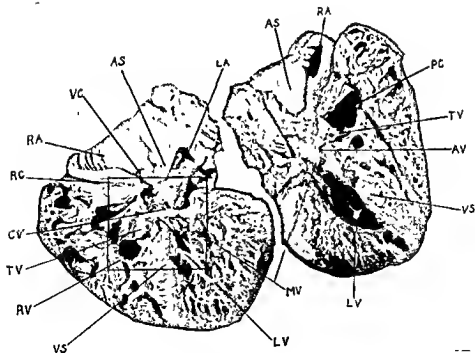
The clinical diagnosis of congenital heart block is not difficult. When the presence of auriculoventricular dissociation is proved by an electrocardiogram taken shortly after birth, a defect in the upper third of the interventricular septum is at once suggested. In this patient, the cyanosis, cardiac







B



C

enlargement, and the systolic murmur were physical signs in keeping with this impression. The clinical recognition of the other abnormalities associated with the interventricular septal defect in this case was, of course, impossible.

The diagnosis of congenital heart block in older children, in addition to the typical electrocardiogram, rests upon the history of bradycardia at a very early age and the absence of an infection that might cause heart block after birth, such as rheumatic fever, chorea, diphtheria or congenital syphilis. The occurrence of syncopal attacks at an early age is fairly good evidence of the existence of heart block prior to the attacks.

### PULMONARY STENOSIS

Complete atresia may be present (page 348) or the pulmonary valve may be markedly stenosed, the pulmonary artery small and the right ventricle large. Associated septal defects are very common because of obstruction of the blood flow from the right ventricle and are in some measure compensatory. Pulmonary stenosis is a component of Fallot's tetralogy (page 347). In complete atresia the blood may reach the lungs through a patent ductus arteriosus. If this is absent, dilatation of the bronchial arteries usually occurs. Uncomplicated pulmonary stenosis is rare.

**Signs.** Cyanosis, stunted growth, clubbed fingers, polycythemia, thrill and harsh systolic murmur in the second or second and third intercostal spaces just to the left of the sternum. The pulmonic second sound is diminished or absent.

**Electrocardiogram.** Marked right axis deviation is encountered in addition to the large P-waves that are associated with right auricular enlargement (Fig. 135).

## TETRALOGY OF FALLOT

(Most common cause of congenital cyanosis in patients surviving to adult life)

The combination of defects that makes up the tetralogy consists of:

1. Ventricular septal defect.
2. Pulmonary stenosis.
3. Dextroposition of the aorta.
4. Hypertrophy of the right ventricle.

If pulmonary stenosis develops before the septum closes, blood is shunted from the right to the left side of the heart and then to the aorta which is dextroposed. This is followed by hypertrophy of the right ventricle. Cyanosis is always present.

**Signs.** A systolic murmur is present over the precordium and is most intense over the pulmonary area. There is a systolic thrill in the pulmonary area.

**Electrocardiogram.** Right axis deviation.

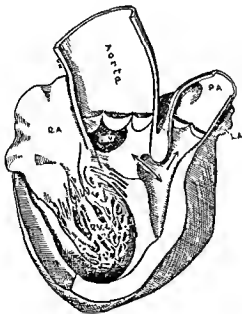


FIG. 134. Schematic drawing illustrating Tetralogy of Fallot.

**Roentgenogram.** Diminished prominence of the pulmonary conus with elevation of the apex by enlargement of the right ventricle may give coeur en sabot appearance (Figs. 29 and 136).

enlargement, and the systolic murmur were physical signs in keeping with this impression. The clinical recognition of the other abnormalities associated with the interventricular septal defect in this case was, of course, impossible.

The diagnosis of congenital heart block in older children, in addition to the typical electrocardiogram, rests upon the history of bradycardia at a very early age and the absence of an infection that might cause heart block after birth, such as rheumatic fever, chorea, diphtheria or congenital syphilis. The occurrence of syncopal attacks at an early age is fairly good evidence of the existence of heart block prior to the attacks.

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#### PULMONARY STENOSIS

Complete atresia may be present (page 348) or the pulmonary valve may be markedly stenosed, the pulmonary artery small and the right ventricle large. Associated septal defects are very common because of obstruction of the blood flow from the right ventricle and are in some measure compensatory. Pulmonary stenosis is a component of Fallot's tetralogy (page 347). In complete atresia the blood may reach the lungs through a patent ductus arteriosus. If this is absent, dilatation of the bronchial arteries usually occurs. Uncomplicated pulmonary stenosis is rare.

**Signs.** Cyanosis, stunted growth, clubbed fingers, polycythemia, thrill and harsh systolic murmur in the second or second and third intercostal spaces just to the left of the sternum. The pulmonic second sound is diminished or absent.

**Electrocardiogram.** Marked right axis deviation is encountered in addition to the large P-waves that are associated with right auricular enlargement (Fig. 135).

## TETRALOGY OF FALLOT

(Most common cause of congenital cyanosis in patients surviving to adult life)

The combination of defects that makes up the tetralogy consists of:

1. Ventricular septal defect.
2. Pulmonary stenosis.
3. Dextroposition of the aorta.
4. Hypertrophy of the right ventricle.

If pulmonary stenosis develops before the septum closes, blood is shunted from the right to the left side of the heart and then to the aorta which is dextroposed. This is followed by hypertrophy of the right ventricle. Cyanosis is always present.

Signs. A systolic murmur is present over the precordium and is most intense over the pulmonary area. There is a systolic thrill in the pulmonary area.

Electrocardiogram. Right axis deviation.

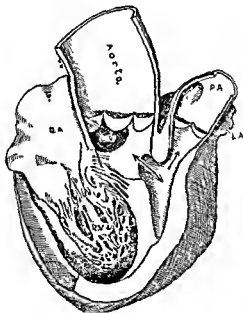


FIG. 134. Schematic drawing illustrating Tetralogy of Fallot.

Roentgenogram. Diminished prominence of the pulmonary conus with elevation of the apex by enlargement of the right ventricle may give *cœur en sabot* appearance (Figs. 29 and 136).

PULMONARY STENOSIS ASSOCIATED WITH PATENT FORAMEN  
OVALE—AUTOPSY

Case 55. A white American male, 22 years of age, was admitted to the Tuberculosis Division of the Philadelphia General Hospital complaining of cough, hemoptysis, and dyspnea. Extensive tuberculous invasion of both lung apices was found, and the sputum was positive for tubercle bacilli. There was a systolic thrill and murmur over the pulmonary area. The fingers were clubbed. Cyanosis was present.

AUTOPSY. Heart weight: 420 Gm. The pulmonic valve had two cusps and showed marked stenosis. Foramen ovale patulous. No other defects.

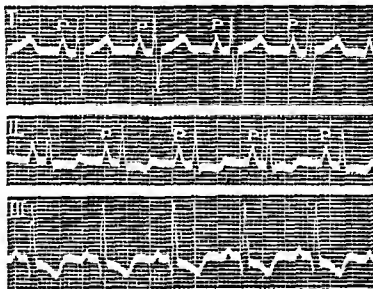


FIG. 135 The electrocardiogram in congenital pulmonary stenosis. Note high, pointed P waves in the first two leads. Right axis deviation is present.

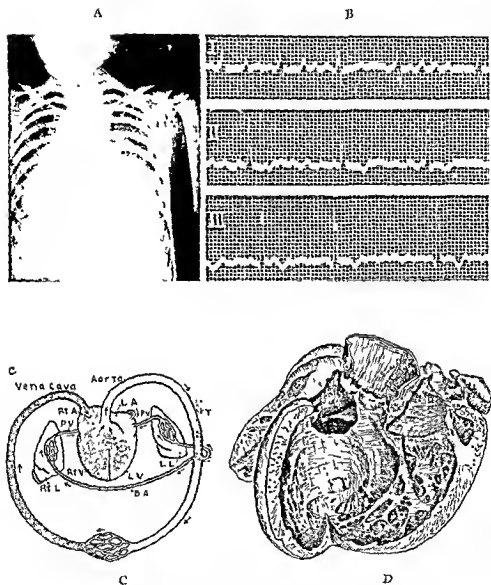


FIG. 116. A. Roentgenogram of chest. Note "coeur en sabot" appearance of cardiac silhouette. There is considerable enlargement of all chambers. B. The electrocardiogram. Auricular fibrillation is present. Right axis deviation. C. Diagram illustrating circulation in Case 56. The aorta is dextroposed. The bronchial arteries (B.A.) supply the lungs. They arise from the descending aorta at the level of the trachea (T). There is complete pulmonary atresia. Interventricular septal defect is also present. D. Drawing of specimen. Note hypertrophy of the right ventricle, complete pulmonary atresia, dextroposition of the aorta and interventricular septal defect.



## ILLUSTRATIVE CASE

COMPLETE PULMONARY ATRESIA WITH DEFECT OF VENTRICULAR SEPTUM,  
DEXTROPOSITION OF THE AORTA, AND HYPERTROPHY OF THE  
BRONCHIAL ARTERIES—AUTOPSY<sup>209</sup>

**Case 56.** A cyanotic male child of five was admitted to Memorial Hospital complaining of shortness of breath and vomiting. He was well until four months before admission when he had a sudden convulsive seizure following exercise. Dyspnea, fatigue, and cyanosis appeared for the first time. A second convulsive seizure the day before admission was followed by edema, dyspnea and vomiting.

**PHYSICAL EXAMINATION.** B.P. 90/60. Pulse 120, totally irregular. Cyanosis. Dyspnea. Edema of the extremities to the knees. Marked bulging of the left side of the chest. Apex beat in the anterior axillary line in the sixth interspace. There was a thrill palpable over the third intercostal space to the left of the sternum. A systolic murmur was heard over the whole precordium, loudest in the region of the thrill. Systolic and diastolic murmurs were present over the cardiac apex. The liver edge extended to the umbilicus. No ascites. Dulness of the right chest posteriorly to the scapular angle. Fingers and toes showed marked clubbing (See Fig. 124).

**LABORATORY DATA.** Blood count: hemoglobin 120 per cent (Sahli); R.B.C. 6,410,000; W.B.C. 6,200; Differential normal. Wassermann and Mantoux tests negative. The urine showed a light cloud of albumin and 3 R.B.C. per H.P.F.

**Electrocardiogram (Fig. 136B):** auricular fibrillation and right axis deviation.

**Röntgenogram (Fig. 136A):** heart enlarged in all diameters. Note "cœur en sabot" outline. A concavity replaces the curve in the left border usually formed by the pulmonary artery.

**CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS.** A. Etiologic: Congenital. Tetralogy of Fallot (?) B. Anatomic: Cardiac enlargement. Interventricular septal defect, pulmonary stenosis, right-sided aorta. C. Physiologic: Congestive cardiac failure. Auricular fibrillation. D. Functional Classification: Class 4. Therapeutic Classification: Class E.

**Discussion.** Bed rest and digitalization resulted in slight improvement. Three days after admission there was a sudden attack of dyspnea progressing to orthopnea during which the cyanosis became extreme, and marked distention of the neck veins appeared. A venesection (300 cc.) was performed, and the patient was placed in an oxygen tent. Theoretically oxygen administration should not be expected to relieve the cyanosis of congenital heart disease. However, some improvement was noted in this instance. The digitalis was cut to a maintenance level of 2 grains daily on the eighth hospital day. The liver appeared to be much smaller in size. During the third week in the hospital death occurred suddenly following a third convulsive seizure.

This patient shows that little decrease in the exercise tolerance is possible in some instances in the presence of marked derangement in anatomic structure. This lad lived on the third floor of a city apartment house where there was no elevator. It is remarkable that he was able to climb these steps many times daily without the appearance of cardiac symptoms. Unfortunately, he was also allowed to engage in active play with other children, and this contributed to the rapid breakdown of his reserve. The slowing of the cerebral circulation in the early stage of failure in the presence of the polycythemia precipitated the convulsive seizure. Following this the decline

was rapid. The persistent vomiting that preceded his admission to the hospital probably was caused by stasis of the circulation and the clogging of the blood channels along the gastro-intestinal tract.

The congestive failure was treated in the same manner as failure caused by any other type of heart disease. Death occurred following a convulsion and was attributed to cerebral thrombosis.

Four other examples of complete pulmonary atresia with closed ductus arteriosus and a pulmonary circulation carried on through dilated bronchial arteries have been previously described in the literature. The ages of death of these patients were 33, 30, 20 and 6 years, all surviving longer than this patient. Two of the patients in the series died following intercurrent infections, while thrombosis in the bronchial arteries was the cause of death in the other two. The patient showing the smallest bronchial arteries died in childhood, so it may be said that the larger the bronchial arteries in the presence of complete pulmonary atresia, the better the chance of survival.

The occurrence of auricular fibrillation in this patient is worthy of note, for the arrhythmia is very rare under the age of 15. It is likewise seldom seen associated with congenital heart disease. However, while advanced cardiac disease of any type may be present without the occurrence of auricular fibrillation, when congestive failure occurs with its auricular strain, fibrillation may appear at any age.

There is some excuse for mistaking complete pulmonary atresia for the tetralogy. In the first place, if the ductus arteriosus is closed, the coeuren sabot appearance of the roentgenogram suggests the latter diagnosis when other manifestations of congenital heart disease are present. When the interventricular septal defect is small and the murmur loud and well transmitted to the base of the heart, differential diagnosis becomes most difficult, if not impossible. However, in the absence of a murmur and thrill over the pulmonary area in patients showing this typical roentgen ray picture in addition to dextroposition of the aorta, polycythemia and clubbing, the diagnosis of complete pulmonary atresia is to be thought of. If the patient is an adult, greatly enlarged bronchial arteries can be predicted.

## TREATMENT

When patients who have congenital cardiac disease survive the period of childhood, the greatest threat to life is the development of subacute bacterial endocarditis at the site of the malformation. In many of the cases the defects are otherwise compatible with a long existence and in this respect resemble healed rheumatic lesions. Subacute bacterial endocarditis is most apt to be superimposed on interventricular septal or aortic defects, patent ductus arteriosus, or bicuspid aortic valves. The blood flow through the abnormal shunts in time produces fibrosis and thickening about their margins and on the walls of the right ventricle and pulmonary artery.

These are ideal locations for the growth of micro-organisms. Auricular septal defects escape this danger. Following tonsillectomy, dental extractions, or any other operative procedure when a temporary blood stream invasion is apt to occur, sulfanilamide or one of its derivatives should be administered (page 193).

The treatment of congenital heart disease lies chiefly in the prevention of complications. These children should be guarded against infections of all types in much the same manner as the rheumatic group. Upper respiratory infections or focal infections in teeth, tonsils or sinuses, and all minor ailments should be carefully managed and always regarded more seriously in children who have congenital heart disease than in normal children. Pulmonary tuberculosis is a danger, particularly in patients who have defects of the pulmonary artery.

Children who have serious defects and permanent cyanosis should never be allowed to attend public schools, where the temptation is present to compete with normal children. Special schools that provide individual attention are needed. The acyanotic group may attend school, but should not be allowed to engage in competitive athletic activities. Exercises that do not produce cyanosis or dyspnea, however, may be allowed.

Careful medical supervision is needed in order that the problems of management may be intelligently met as they arise. Children who have congenital lesions should be frequently examined at the time of puberty, when rapid growth adds another burden to the circulation.

Proper guidance during early years, especially in the selection of a suitable occupation that will not place too great a strain on the circulation in later life or expose the patient needlessly to changing weather conditions, is very important.

In the cyanotic group the treatment can only be palliative, since the oxygen unsaturation eventually creates a train of complications, all of which tend to influence the course unfavorably. Sudden death is not infrequent in many cases of this group. It may also follow spontaneous rupture of the aorta or cerebral hemorrhage in patients who have coarctation. When we consider the group of patients suffering from congenital heart disease as a whole, the most common cause of death is found to be congestive failure (Case 56). Its management is the same as outlined for other types of heart disease with the exception of the fact that when congestive manifestations appear in congenital heart disease, the outlook is exceedingly poor.

## PROGNOSIS

The prognosis in congenital defects in the absence of cyanosis and clubbing is good as far as the lesion itself is concerned. The complications, however, are always a threat; and therefore prognosis should be guarded. If the only abnormality is patent ductus arteriosus, operation offers a possibility of cure unless this lesion compensates for some other defect.

## THE HEART IN THYROID DISEASE

The cardiac mechanism may be influenced by disorders having their origin elsewhere in the body. Chief among these are disturbances of the thyroid gland, which may be accompanied by either excessive secretion (hyperthyroidism) or a deficient secretion (hypothyroidism). In either of these conditions, the cardiac symptoms may so overshadow the rest of the clinical picture that a diagnosis of some form of primary heart disease may be made. Consequently successful management will depend on recognition of the correct etiologic background.

## HYPERTHYROIDISM

Hyperthyroidism or thyrotoxicosis may appear in patients with the nodular type of goiter (toxic adenoma), or it may develop as a part of the classical picture of exophthalmic goiter. In either instance, the same secondary disturbances take place in the circulation. In nonendemic areas the incidence of the thyrotoxic state depends upon the ability of the physician to recognize the early symptoms of the disease. White<sup>293</sup> found hyperthyroidism to be the main factor in producing cardiac symptoms in 3 per cent of his patients.

The mechanism by which thyroid secretion in excessive or toxic amounts affects the myocardium has been long debated. Some authorities claim that it is merely an "exhaustion state," the end result of overaction of the organ induced by the elevated metabolic rate. Others claim that a specific myocardial lesion is produced, but much doubt remains concerning the existence of such a structural change. Most of the abnormalities that have been described are merely incidental and do not appear to be specifically related to the thyroid hyperfunction.

## SIGNS

There is a wide variation in the clinical picture produced in different patients by the same degree of thyroid overactivity. The main symptoms, palpitation and tachycardia, may be present continuously when secondary to a sinus tachycardia, or paroxysmal when arising from episodes of auricular fibrillation or flutter. Palpitation may be mild, at first appearing only after exertion. Later the rapid heart rate that produces palpitation may be present at all times.

In older patients who have already some degree of coronary sclerosis, the added burden of thyrotoxicosis may be just enough to accentuate this underlying defect, and angina may appear.

Some patients will show a quick progression of the disease with the early appearance of edema and other congestive manifestations. In this group the thyroid background may be entirely overlooked in the presence of other coincidental factors such as hypertension or coronary disease. It is therefore most important to be continually on the lookout for this type of case, for if the correct etiology is discovered, proper treatment may restore the patient to normal activity for an indefinite period. Some observers contend that these advanced symptoms of congestive failure are not produced by the action of the excess of toxic thyroid secretion on a normal heart but appear only in the presence of a previous cardiac lesion of rheumatic, sclerotic, or hypertensive type. The hyperthyroidism in these cases acts merely as the precipitating factor. These primary conditions, of course, do not disappear following successful treatment of the thyroid disorder.

### PATHOLOGY

When the pathologist views the thyroid heart at autopsy, he can point to no specific lesions that characterize the condition. Slight enlargement of the heart is the rule, and there is usually an increase in the size of the individual muscle fibers, but the various chemical changes responsible for the abnormal cardiac action elude detection. No necrotic areas or inflammatory changes are encountered in the endocardium, myocardium or pericardium.

If we view the heart in this condition as only one organ of the body that is influenced by a generalized disturbance, the symptoms will be better understood. The increased metabolism speeds all bodily processes, which naturally places a demand on the heart for more blood, the amount being governed by the degree of elevation of the metabolism. A normal heart can usually meet these demands indefinitely, while a diseased organ will show hypertrophy, and ultimately failure will appear. Some observers<sup>30</sup> view the heart in hyperthyroidism as a circulatory problem quite similar to the arteriovenous aneurysm, since all vascular channels in the thyroid are widely dilated.

### INCIDENCE

Hyperthyroidism may appear at any age. The average reported by Hurxthal<sup>163</sup> is 37, while in a series reported by White and Jones,<sup>393</sup> 56 per cent were found to be between the ages of 30 and 50. In all the groups studied, women predominate, although usually men show the more severe cardiac reactions. While race has little influence on the incidence of thyrotoxicosis, the incidence reported among negroes is low.

### DIAGNOSIS

Examination of the thyrocardiac patient reveals an increase in the rate and force of the heart action. The apex beat is usually readily visible, and the palpating hand will detect an increased force of the cardiac impulse.

An axillary impulse may be seen at times in the presence of an overactive heart, and care should be taken that this is not interpreted as evidence of hypertrophy. Increased pulsation of the vessels of the neck may also appear. The entire picture of overaction is reflected in the cardiac silhouette at the time of the fluoroscopic examination, and this observation serves as valuable suggestive evidence. Systolic murmurs are not uncommon in thyrotoxicosis, particularly over the region of the pulmonary artery, while increase in the size of this vessel and in the entire pulmonary circulation may appear in advanced stages of the disease (see Fig. 139).

Examination of the neck in most cases reveals some enlargement of the thyroid gland, and the well-known eye signs (exophthalmos, inability to converge, widening of palpebral fissures, and lid lag) may be in evidence. All of these may be absent, and the patient may show only a peculiar staring expression which is just as valuable an observation. The skin of the thyrocardiac patient is warm, moist, and flushed and quite characteristically elastic even though he may have lost 30 to 40 pounds in body weight. The patient's attitude is alert, and the motions are quick, nervous, and at times purposeless. The pulse is rapid, averaging about 110. The rhythm of the pulse at first is regular (sinus tachycardia), later becoming irregular owing to the presence of premature beats or paroxysms of auricular fibrillation or flutter. These paroxysms may recur with increasing frequency until the arrhythmia, usually auricular fibrillation, becomes established. The patients who show congestive failure quite often have auricular fibrillation as a complication.

**Blood-Pressure Change.** The most constant change in the blood pressure is an increased pulse pressure caused by a fall in the diastolic level and a less constant elevation of the systolic reading. Evidence of this increased pulse pressure is seen in the "dancing" of the arteries on physical examination and in the increased range of cardiac contractions on fluoroscopy. The increased pulse pressure may give a Corrigan pulse and other peripheral signs.

The electrocardiogram in thyrotoxicosis reveals the nature of any arrhythmia that may be present, but it does not have a pattern that is characteristic of the condition. High T-waves are often observed but are not invariably present; in fact,  $T_2$  may at times be inverted. An uncomplicated sinus tachycardia is the usual finding on electrocardiographic examination in hyperthyroidism.

Determination of the basal metabolic rate is a reliable diagnostic procedure if carefully carried out by an intelligent technician. More than one estimation should be made. Usually the basal metabolic rate in thyrotoxicosis will be from 30 to 75 per cent above the normal. Other laboratory tests may be of value in the diagnosis of thyrotoxicosis when doubt exists. The blood cholesterol values tend to be definitely diminished in hyperthyroidism; there is also a decrease in creatine tolerance,<sup>266</sup> an increase in the rate of the circulation and the blood volume.

In younger patients the diagnosis of thyrotoxicosis is not difficult when

the expression is staring, and there is exophthalmos, tremor, sweating, and enlargement of the thyroid gland. In elderly patients the condition is more apt to be overlooked, since the gland enlargement may be absent or hidden beneath the sternum or the sternomastoid muscle, the eye signs few and the flushing less noticeable. A careful search, however, may show a fine tremor.

The loss of weight is usually marked even though the patient has a splendid appetite and consumes hearty meals. The recognition of this fact serves to differentiate the condition from other wasting diseases. The elderly patient with thyrotoxicosis who comes to the physician complaining of dyspnea, chest pain, weakness, palpitation or edema is quite apt to have an associated arteriosclerosis. It is important, therefore, to keep the possibility of thyrotoxicosis constantly in mind and to make a careful search for additional clues in older patients.

The signs of mitral stenosis may be imitated by the overactive heart of thyrotoxicosis. The first sound at the apex will be accentuated in both conditions, but the thrill and the murmur in mitral disease are diastolic. This usually serves to make the distinction. However, mitral stenosis may be present occasionally with superimposed thyroid disease (see Case 16), in which event other signs must be relied upon. Digitalis will not so readily slow the rapid fibrillation that accompanies thyrotoxicosis, and this observation often leads to the detection of the thyroid background. The reduction in the pulse rate in thyrotoxicosis that follows the administration of iodine is another therapeutic test of value.

### COURSE

The course of the thyrotoxic process in any patient depends on a number of factors; age, sex, social position, duration of the symptoms, and the presence or absence of another form of heart disease. The last circumstance may predispose to the early appearance of heart failure, while hyperthyroidism in younger patients with normal hearts may be well tolerated for many years.

### TREATMENT

Many forms of treatment have been recommended for thyrotoxicosis. When cardiac manifestations are prominent and progressive, however, there is only one, surgery. Subtotal thyroidectomy brings quicker and more certain restoration of health, and for this reason is the best procedure, particularly in patients who have to earn their own living.

Much has been claimed for the cures achieved by continuous medical management, but these are uncertain and often hard to evaluate properly, since the course of the disease in many patients shows a natural tendency to remissions. Many patients cannot afford to take the long rest periods that this course of treatment entails. Surgical relief is eventually sought in most cases; so in the long run, when cardiac symptoms are present, nothing is gained by delay. Where the diagnosis is in doubt, or where the

condition shows a tendency to run a very mild course, sedatives, rest, and psychotherapy may prove beneficial.

**Pre-operative Treatment.** Medical management, however, is most essential in the preparation of the patient for surgery. Rest in bed and the administration of iodine in some form over a period of two weeks prior to operation constitute a regime of recognized value. The form of the iodide is not a matter of importance. Potassium iodide (KI), 0.3 to 0.6 Gm. (5 to 10 grains), or Lugol's solution in 0.3 cc. to 1.8 cc. (5 to 30 minim) doses three times daily may be given. In about 10 days marked improvement in the patient's condition will take place, and this is reflected in the slowing of the pulse, the reduction in the basal metabolic rate, and improvement in all the symptoms of thyrotoxicosis. Operation during this temporary period of induced calm can be performed with much less risk.

SEDATIVES should be used during this preparatory regime to secure proper rest, and thiamin chloride (vitamin-B<sub>1</sub>) should be given. The best time for operation is determined by observing the pulse, the basal metabolic rate, and the weight in each individual. Usually a period of 10 days is sufficient in uncomplicated cases.

DIGITALIS should be given pre-operatively in every case of congestive failure regardless of the presence or absence of auricular fibrillation. The amount of digitalis tolerated by a patient who has a greatly increased metabolic rate is, of course, much higher than can be administered safely to another patient of the same weight, who has a normal basal metabolic rate.

AURICULAR FIBRILLATION is present in about 10 per cent of all patients suffering from thyrotoxicosis and in about 50 per cent of those who show signs of congestive failure. The best treatment for this arrhythmia is subtotal thyroidectomy. Spontaneous return to normal rhythm following operation may be expected in a large percentage of cases.

CONGESTIVE FAILURE. In the pre-operative management of congestive failure, the usual measures are employed (Chapter 2). Bed rest, restriction of fluid intake, relief of pressure caused by accumulation of fluid in serous cavities, and the use of mercurial diuretics constitute the measures of greatest value. The attempt should be made pre-operatively to control failure, since operation in the presence of failure usually means subjecting the patient to an increased risk.

IF AURICULAR FIBRILLATION does not disappear spontaneously following operation, quinidine should be given (page 383). The chances of restoring normal rhythm by the use of this drug are excellent if the usual rules for its administration are followed. I do not think that it is of any value to establish quinidine maintenance in thyroid patients following operation after normal rhythm returns, for the simple reason that the cause underlying the arrhythmia has been removed. Recurrence of fibrillation is rare, unless there is also a recurrence of the hyperthyroidism.

Pre-operative control of the nervous symptoms is essential. The almost specific effect of iodine in calming the pulse rate may likewise cause the



out any serum present may swing the balance in a favorable direction during a postoperative crisis.

Irradiation of the thyroid as a substitute for operation has been gaining in popularity and is the method of choice in cases where the risk of operation is too great. It may occasionally bring about enough improvement to enable operation to be safely performed at a later date. The same medical preparation of rest and iodine should be employed when treatment by irradiation is used. These courses should be planned and given by a competent radiologist, and the results controlled by frequent determinations of the basal metabolic rate.

Roentgen-ray therapy is worthy of consideration in the treatment of hyperthyroidism in children. The disease is rare in children under 12, but a number of instances have been reported between the ages of 12 and 15. Since this period of life is important from the endocrine standpoint, Rose and Pendergrass<sup>322</sup> suggest a trial of roentgen-ray therapy in order to avoid the necessity of removal of the gland, and report their results in 10 cases. In five cases there was disappearance of the goiter, and in eight cases recovery was complete. The average dose was 1950 roentgen units over a period of six months. If improvement is not observed in three months, continued use of irradiation is unwarranted. Should exacerbation of the disease occur at any time, the treatment is stopped, and the patient prepared for operation.

## ILLUSTRATIVE CASES

### **HYPERTHYROIDISM—DEATH FROM EDEMA OF THE LARYNX FOLLOWING THYROIDECTOMY—AUTOPSY**

**CASE 57.** Mrs. J. B., a colored housewife of 24, was admitted to the Philadelphia General Hospital on 12/29/34, complaining of loss of weight, nervousness, and palpitation. The symptoms had been present and progressive for a year.

**PHYSICAL EXAMINATION.** B.P. 140/80. There was a diffuse enlargement of the thyroid, exophthalmos, and tremor. A systolic apical murmur was heard, and the first sound over the same area was accentuated. There was no increase in cardiac size.

**LABORATORY DATA.** Basal metabolic rate, plus 39 per cent. The electrocardiogram showed sinus tachycardia. The roentgen examination showed an overactive heart but no enlargement. The blood and urine were negative.

**SUBSEQUENT COURSE.** Following rather prolonged preparation a subtotal thyroidectomy was performed on 1/24/35. The patient left the operating room in good condition, but an hour later developed stridor due to edema of the larynx and died in spite of emergency tracheotomy.

**AUTOPSY.** (Fig. 137). The heart was of normal size and consistency but showed acute dilatation of the right ventricle. No lesions were present.

**Discussion.** The development of stridor following thyroidectomy suggests either injury to the recurrent laryngeal nerves or, as shown in this case, edema of the larynx. Hemorrhage into the operative field with pressure on the trachea by a hematoma may cause the symptom. Examination of the larynx should be done at once to determine the cause, and if relief

is not promptly obtained, especially if cyanosis develops, an immediate tracheotomy is indicated.

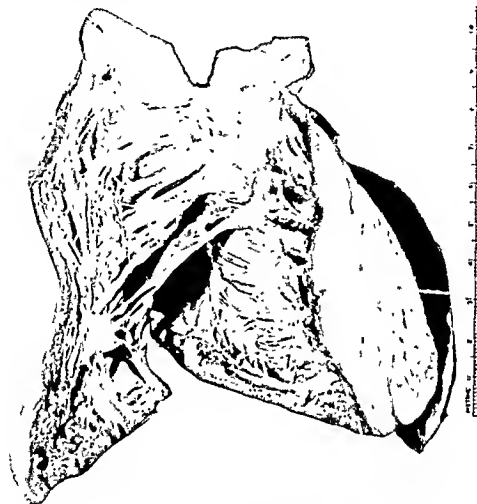


FIG. 137. The heart in hyperthyroidism. Note absence of hypertrophy and the delicate heart valves (Autopsy No. 28,782, Philadelphia General Hospital.)

The heart in this case is typical of uncomplicated thyrotoxicosis. Note the relative increase in the size of the right ventricle and the normal, delicate heart valves.

#### THYROTOXICOSIS COMPLICATED BY PAROXYSMS OF AURICULAR FLUTTER— COMPLETE RELIEF FOLLOWING SUBTOTAL THYROIDECTOMY

**CASE 58.** Mrs. S. B., a housewife of 56, was first seen March 17, 1936, complaining of loss of weight, nervousness and spells of rapid heart action.

**HISTORY.** All symptoms began following a series of domestic difficulties six months before the initial examination. During this period there was a weight loss of 30 pounds.

The patient had previously been treated for a "nervous breakdown." When spells of rapid heart action and increase in blood pressure were noted, she was diagnosed hypertensive heart disease and given digitalis in large doses. This had no effect. She was unable to sleep because of her "nervousness and rapid heart." Slight dyspnea was present. No edema.

**PHYSICAL EXAMINATION.** B.P. 170/80. Pulse 140. Patient emaciated. Skin was warm and moist, much more so than would be expected in a person of her age. There was

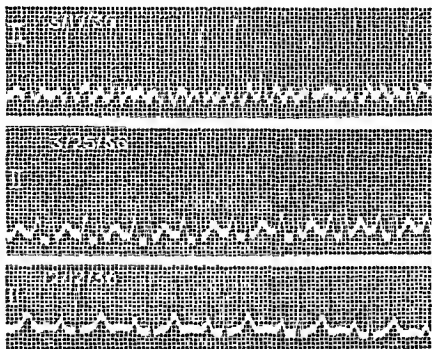


FIG. 138. The electrocardiogram (lead 2) taken on 3/17/36 during one of attacks shows presence of auricular flutter. There are varying degrees of ventricular response. A portion of the same lead of a tracing taken eight days later shows sinus tachycardia. Note high, pointed P-waves. A record taken at time of follow-up visit eight months after operation shows sinus rhythm, rate 80 and normal P-waves.

tremor and slight thyroid swelling. No exophthalmos. There were pulsations noted in the neck and a diffuse apex beat was seen in the mid-clavicular line. There was no cardiac enlargement on percussion. A systolic murmur was heard over the mitral area.

**LABORATORY DATA** BMR plus 49 per cent. Fluoroscopy showed characteristic overaction. There was no increase in cardiac size.

The electrocardiogram (Fig. 138A) made at the time of the first examination (3/17/36) during a paroxysm of rapid heart action showed that the mechanism was auricular flutter. There was a varying ventricular response. On 3/25/36 sinus tachycardia was present. Note the increase in height of the P-waves in the tracing (Lead 2). On 12/12/36 the electrocardiogram was normal.

**CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS.** A. Etiologic: Hyperthyroidism. B. Anatomic: No cardiac enlargement. C. Physiologic: Paroxysmal auricular flutter. D. Functional Classification: Class 1. Therapeutic Classification: Class D.

**Discussion.** Three weeks later (one week to convince, two weeks to prepare) a subtotal thyroidectomy was performed. A very small nodule of

thyroid tissue was allowed to remain on each side of the trachea. The convalescence was smooth. The paroxysms of auricular flutter did not recur following operation.

On discharge from the hospital on the eighth postoperative day, the basal metabolic rate was plus 29 per cent, the pulse 100, and normal sinus rhythm was present. Potassium iodide was continued in 0.3 Gm. (five grains) doses after meals. The patient gained three pounds during the first postoperative week.

Six weeks later, the basal metabolic rate was plus 10. The pulse had dropped to 90, and there was considerable subjective improvement. B.P. 130/90. No cardiac symptoms were present. A total gain in weight of 15 pounds since the operation was recorded at this time.

Follow-up examination three months after operation showed a basal metabolic rate of minus four per cent. The weight was now 130 pounds, a further increase of 15 pounds since the last visit. No cardiac symptoms. Pulse 80, B.P., 140/80.

When this patient was first seen, she was an invalid confined to bed, nervous, emaciated, and discouraged. A diagnosis of hypertensive heart disease had been made, and her outlook was considered poor. The importance of making the correct etiologic diagnosis in heart disease can be appreciated when we view the patient 15 weeks later, active, quiet, and plump, restored to health, and able to carry on the usual activities of a woman of her years.

This result teaches us never to overlook the possibility of thyrotoxicosis in elderly patients who do not present the usual eye signs or thyroid tumor, particularly when these patients have increased blood pressure, a history of loss of weight, nervousness, and spells of rapid heart action. Here is a curable type of heart disease.

#### EXOPHTHALMIC GOITER—SUBTOTAL THYROIDECTOMY FOLLOWED BY POSTOPERATIVE HYPOTHYROIDISM

Case 59. Mrs. G. P., an Italian housewife of 27, was first seen in October, 1935, complaining of nervousness and palpitation. All the classical signs of thyrotoxicosis were present on physical examination. The basal metabolic rate was plus 60.

Preparation for operation extended over two weeks and consisted of the usual measures. At the end of this time, the basal metabolic rate was plus 35 per cent, and the nervous symptoms showed considerable improvement. There had been a two pound gain in weight.

A subtotal thyroidectomy was performed, and the convalescence was uneventful. Three months after discharge the patient moved to another city and was lost sight of for three years. On November, 1938, she returned for study with a diagnosis of chronic nephritis and secondary anemia. There was swelling of the face, hands, and legs. B.P. 120/80. The heart was slightly enlarged. The urine showed a trace of albumin, specific gravity, 1.020, but no casts. The basal metabolic rate was minus 40 per cent and the blood cholesterol 285 mg. per 100 cc.

Discussion. The diagnosis of nephritis in this instance was made without a full consideration of the past medical history and was based on insufficient evidence. The color, the edema, and the slight trace of albumin were secondary to the postoperative hypothyroidism, and not to a renal lesion.

The surgeon ordinarily leaves behind a remnant of thyroid tissue, the

size of which is governed by his judgment as to the nature of the disturbance evident in the resected gland. This glandular substance that remains may support the bodily needs for a time and then burn out and become entirely inactive. Consequently a hypothyroid state develops.

In some patients who do not complain of any symptoms, a postoperative basal metabolic rate a few points below normal is not an indication for thyroid administration. However, where actual symptoms of myxedema develop, treatment with thyroid gland is indicated.

This girl is certainly far better off in her present condition than she was when her life was threatened by the hyperthyroidism. This fact must be pointed out at the start, and unjust criticism directed toward the surgeon should not be allowed. The patient should be thankful, since this evidence points to final victory over her thyrotoxic state. Myxedema is easily managed (page 368).

#### TOXIC GOITER—DEATH FOLLOWING POSTOPERATIVE THYROTOXIC CRISIS—AUTOPSY

Case 60. M. B., a colored female of 43, was admitted to the Philadelphia General Hospital with a chief complaint of nervousness. This symptom was noted a year before and was accompanied by swelling of the neck. Following this she developed tremor, excessive sweating, dyspnea, tachycardia, and a weight loss of 20 pounds. Continuous iodine therapy (five drops t i d.) for the past five months gave some relief.

PHYSICAL EXAMINATION. B.P. 190/90. Exophthalmos, thyroid enlargement, tremor, tachycardia. Heart rate 150, rhythm regular, apex beat diffuse and wavy in the mid-clavicular line. The first sound was accentuated at the apex. There was a systolic apical murmur. A moderate sclerosis of the vessels was observed.

LABORATORY DATA. B.M.R. plus 96 to plus 39. Roentgenogram, heart overactive but not enlarged. Substernal thyroid.

Blood count Hemoglobin 82 per cent (Sahli), Red blood cells—4,700,000, White blood cells—6,000, Polymorphonuclears—47 per cent, lymphocytes—52 per cent, basophiles—1 per cent.

PROCEDURE. Bed rest, iodine, sedatives, glucose, for two weeks. When the basal metabolic rate fell to plus 39 per cent and symptoms subsided, a subtotal thyroidectomy was performed.

OUTCOME. On the first postoperative day, the patient was restless and irrational. The pulse rate mounted steadily to 170-180, and the temperature to 106° F. There was dyspnea. Death occurred on the second postoperative day in spite of the usual restorative measures.

AUTOPSY. Heart and lungs were removed *en masse* and are shown in Fig. 139. Note the striking prominence of the pulmonary conus and the pulmonary artery. The latter was elongated and widened, its intrapericardial portion measuring 6 cm. in length, and the diameter at the base three cm. It overshadowed in size the aorta which was likewise somewhat elongated. The heart was normal in size with a muscle of firm consistency. The valves were normal.

Discussion. Preparation in this case was carried out along the usual lines. The postoperative storm that was directly responsible for the death of the patient might have been prevented if a longer period of preparation had been allowed. A multiple stage operation might also have averted the postoperative crisis. However, storms may occur after partial removal or ligation as well as following subtotal thyroidectomy.

Iodine is the main drug at the time of postoperative crisis (page 358). The routine use of iodine pre-operatively has removed the main objection

to one-stage total thyroidectomy, and the risk, as shown by figures from many clinics, has decreased to less than 1 per cent.

Some observers claim that the discharge of adrenalin accounts for the postoperative storm. In this respect we can realize how important it is

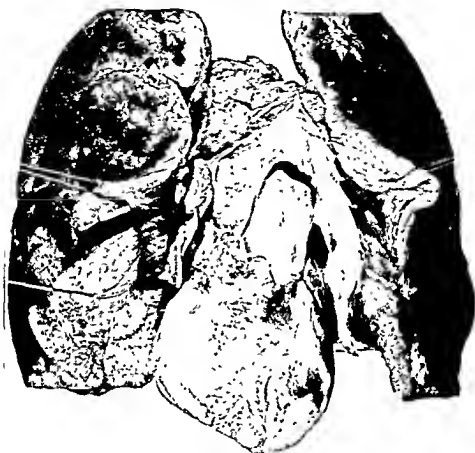


FIG 139. The heart in hyperthyroidism. Note the enlargement of the pulmonary artery, pulmonary conus and the right ventricle. (Autopsy No. 29,530, Philadelphia General Hospital.)

to save the patient all we can from exposure to disturbing situations before, during, and following operation. Care should likewise be used in prescribing adrenalin for these patients, no matter what the situation may be.

#### RHEUMATIC HEART DISEASE WITH SUPERIMPOSED THYROTOXICOSIS— SUDDEN DEATH ON FIFTH POSTOPERATIVE DAY—AUTOPSY

CASE 61. Mrs. C. H., an American housewife of 45, was admitted to the Woman's College Hospital on 9/21/34, complaining of palpitation, nervousness, and weakness of two months' duration.

**HISTORY.** The patient had rheumatic heart disease for some years that required little treatment until two months before admission. At this time she noticed increasing nervousness, tremor, weakness, and palpitation. Her dyspnea increased and there was slight edema of the ankles in the evening one month before admission. During two months she lost 18 pounds in weight.

**PHYSICAL EXAMINATION.** B.P. 150/90. Heart: rate, 120, rhythm totally irregular. Tremor. Skin warm and moist. There was a slight swelling of the right lobe of the thyroid gland. The apex beat was palpated in the sixth interspace 2 cm. outside the mid-clavicular line. There was an accentuation of the first sound and a diastolic murmur at the apex. The basal metabolic rate was plus 24. The rest of the examination was irrelevant.

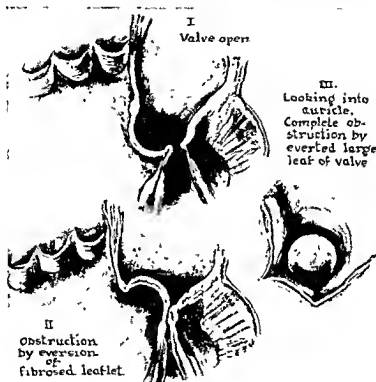


FIG. 140. Eversion of the mitral leaflet.

**IMPRESSION.** A. Etiologic: Rheumatic. Inactive. Thyrotoxicosis. B. Anatomic: Cardiac enlargement. Mitral stenosis. C. Physiologic: Auricular fibrillation. D. Functional Classification: Class 3 Therapeutic Classification: Class D.

**PROGRESS.** On Lugol's solution the pulse rate decreased to 80 but remained irregular. The patient was improved. No signs of congestive failure were evident. A subtotal thyroidectomy was performed on the thirteenth hospital day.

The patient's course during the first five postoperative days was stormy. She was irrational until the third day. On the sixth day, because of the continuation of auricular fibrillation, she was given a small test dose of quinidine sulfate, 0.2 Gm. (3 grains). The next day, shortly after a second dose of 0.3 Gm. (5 grains) was given, she died.

**AUTOPSY.** Heart weight, 330 Gm. The muscle was pale and soft. The left ventricle was dilated. The right ventricle was considerably dilated and hypertrophied. The left auricle was enormously dilated with thickened and scarred endocardium, especially on

the posterior wall. On the anterior mitral leaflet, there was a thickened fibrotic area. This mass of tissue bulged up into the auricle and pressed against the posterior leaflet completely blocking the stenotic mitral orifice (Fig. 140). The aortic valve leaflets were thickened, puckered and obviously incompetent. The pulmonary artery was dilated and atheromatous.

**Discussion.** This patient's death can be attributed to sudden (forward) failure of the circulation, resulting from an eversion of the mitral leaflet. The cause of this unusual accident remains a mystery. Since it followed an attempt to restore normal rhythm by quinidine, the situation may be discussed from this angle.

It is the usual practice to administer quinidine postoperatively in all cases where auricular fibrillation does not cease spontaneously. By the fifth post-operative day, in over 60 per cent of the cases, normal rhythm will replace the fibrillation. This patient was given the usual test dose. The next day a 5-grain capsule was administered, and shortly before the sudden death of the patient, the intern<sup>†</sup> had reported the pulse to be regular. Sudden death after the use of quinidine in patients with fibrillation of long standing may follow the dislodging of a clot in the auricular appendix with the production of an embolus. Consequently the drug should never be used in these cases, particularly if there is evidence of congestive failure.

In this patient the fibrillation was recent and was brought about by the added burden of the thyrotoxicosis. However, advanced rheumatic heart disease with mitral stenosis complicated the picture. The beginning of coordinated auricular contractions may have created sufficient change in intracardiac pressure to cause the accident. The exact mechanism of this rare happening has, so far, been unexplained.

## HYPOTHYROIDISM

Hypothyroidism or myxedema results from a deficiency in the thyroid hormone and is likewise attended by a variety of cardiac manifestations. This state may develop in early childhood or in adult life, and its effect on the organism in each instance will be quite different. Means<sup>26a</sup> divides hypothyroid states into (1) infantile myxedema or cretinism, (2) childhood or juvenile myxedema, and (3) adult myxedema or Gull's disease.

### ETIOLOGY

Sporadic cretinism follows thyroid atrophy but the exact cause of this change is unknown. The cretin shows retardation of growth and development, associated with delay in bone ossification, epiphyseal union, and dentition. The face is quite characteristic, with its stupid expression, thick lips and protruding tongue. For this reason, cretins resemble one another.

Juvenile myxedema, produced when there is lack of thyroid secretion prior to puberty, occupies a place between cretinism and myxedema. It differs from cretinism since normal or nearly normal amounts of thyroid



secretion are available for the early years of growth and development, although the supply is cut off before the process has been completed.

The adult type of myxedema is a rare disease caused by atrophy of the thyroid gland that develops spontaneously or as the result of a previous inflammatory process. This manifestation of hypothyroidism is particularly interesting to us because of the profound circulatory alterations that accompany it. The generalized infiltration of skin with a mucus-like substance that does not pit on pressure characterizes the condition (see Fig. 142A). The myxedema heart is often uniformly enlarged owing to infiltration with the same material. Skeletal muscle shows on examination a pale edematous appearance, and fluid may collect, sometimes in considerable quantities, in the serous cavities.<sup>259</sup>

### SIGNS

In myxedema the reduction in the basal metabolic rate is striking. Levels of minus 40 and below are not uncommon. This decrease is accompanied by profound alterations in the protein metabolism with retention of protein in the intercellular spaces and increase in the proteins and cholesterol of the blood. The pulse rate drops, the minute volume output decreases, and the whole picture is reflected fluoroscopically in the lazy dilated heart of the myxedematous patient. The activity of the organism drops very close to the level observed in hibernating animals.

### COURSE

The onset of the myxedematous state is slow, and marked progress usually takes place before it is detected clinically. This may be caused by the gradual destruction of thyroid tissue by some unknown process which may start years before the patient appears for treatment. Its nature, therefore, generally eludes detection.

### SYMPTOMS

Symptoms develop in proportion to the reduction in the metabolic rate. When this is of slight degree, only mild symptoms appear. Sweating decreases, and the patient ceases to complain of the summer heat,\* and since the body fires are burning low, there is a dislike for the cold weather. The myxedematous patient is contented to sit down and take little interest in the passing scene. Mental dulness increases, and considerable time is consumed by sleep. Constipation is complained of, and headaches usually appear. The hair becomes thin, particularly along the back of the neck, and deafness may be noted.

The cardiac symptoms are part of this general picture. Dyspnea is first to appear and soon becomes marked on slight exertion. Some patients develop cardiac pain that is relieved by the administration of thyroid gland; however, as Means points out,<sup>266</sup> it is far more common to have thyroid therapy produce angina than relieve it. The heart is enlarged, the rhythm

\* A very suggestive symptom in Philadelphia.

regular, the rate slow, and the sounds are usually feeble. If another type of heart disease is already present, a superimposed myxedematous state may precipitate congestive failure. In spite of these numerous characteristic symptoms, it is surprising how often the diagnosis of myxedema is missed.

### TREATMENT

**Thyroid Medication.** The effect of thyroid therapy in myxedema is most gratifying since it restores to normal all bodily processes. Tablets of dried thyroid gland are efficient and less expensive than other preparations. Means has found, after a careful study of 50 cases, that requirements show little variation. A dose of one-half of a grain a day of dried gland should keep the basal metabolic rate of a myxedematous subject at a level of minus 20. One grain daily will maintain it at minus 10, one and one-half grains at approximately minus 5, and three grains daily at a normal level. IT IS OF THE GREATEST IMPORTANCE THAT THE MYXEDEMATOUS STATE SHOULD BE CONTROLLED ON THE SMALLEST DOSES OF THYROM COMPATIBLE WITH A NORMAL EXISTENCE. Inasmuch as there is no way of knowing the basal metabolic rate before the onset of myxedema, the patient must be regulated by clinical trial, and the effect of thyroid therapy on the symptoms closely studied. The minimum dosage that gives the desired effect is then continued for the rest of the patient's life.

In prescribing or dispensing thyroid tablets, the physician should remember that there are differences in the tablets supplied by the various manufacturers and that a patient balanced satisfactorily on one brand may show symptoms of hyperthyroidism on another. The figures given above refer to U.S.P. thyroid. Variations in the strength of the different preparations will usually be indicated on the label; so the necessary adjustments can be made. It is, however, unwise to change the brand of thyroid used. Thyroid gland U.S.P. should be prescribed because of its lower cost and the uniformity of its action. Familiarity with the dose of this standard preparation is all that is necessary. The addition of 1 cc. (16 minims) of dilute hydrochloric acid taken with meals may enhance the action of the thyroid gland in the presence of gastric hypo-acidity.

When thyroid medication is begun, there is a latent period of from six to eight days before its action is evident. An elevation in the basal metabolic rate first appears. This is produced by an increase of fat and carbohydrate metabolism. The blood sugar is increased as the glycogen store of the liver is depleted. At the same time sugar tolerance is diminished, and glycosuria may appear. In the usual subject these changes may result in a loss of weight. If the administration of the thyroid substance is continued, restlessness, irritability, sweating, tachycardia, and muscle tremors will be produced.

THYROXIN is no more effective than dried thyroid gland. This preparation can be administered intravenously, but the indication seldom arises. The action of thyroid gland by mouth is just as satisfactory, and the usual risks that attend any form of intravenous therapy are avoided. Thyroxin

administered by mouth is absorbed less uniformly than dried thyroid and consequently for routine use, aside from the greater cost, it does not display the efficient action of the latter preparation.

**SEQUELAE.** Under treatment with thyroid, the size of the myxedema heart shrinks, the greatest reduction occurring in the largest hearts. This is strong proof that the condition is not one of true hypertrophy but rather a manifestation of the myxedematous state. Heart size returns to normal slowly as the fluid is eliminated and the tone improves. If this does not occur, we should search for the presence of another complicating type of heart disease.

Care must always be exercised in prescribing thyroid for myxedematous patients, for too enthusiastic a start often precipitates grave symptoms. Since myxedema favors the development of arteriosclerosis, it is not surprising that anginal attacks occur when the basal metabolic rate, and consequently, the cardiac work are increased to too great an extent in the beginning of the treatment. If angina appears, the thyroid medication should be temporarily discontinued, and when begun again, smaller doses should be prescribed.

Digitalis has no effect in a case of true myxedema; in fact, it is poorly tolerated. The only indication for its use is the congestive cardiac failure which often occurs when myxedema complicates some other type of heart disease.

Some degree of anemia accompanies myxedema and generally can be attributed to the effect of the disease on the blood-forming organs. When of extreme degree, it may accentuate the cardiac symptoms, particularly the dyspnea. Improvement is then speeded by giving ferrous sulfate, 0.6 Gm. (10 grains) t.i.d., with the thyroid tablets.

## ILLUSTRATIVE CASES

### HYPOTHYROIDISM FOLLOWING IRRADIATION—DEATH FROM CORONARY DISEASE—AUTOPSY

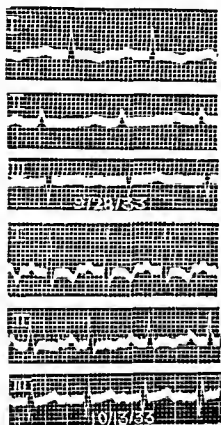
**Case 62.** Mrs. E. K., a white housewife of 43, gave a history of hyperthyroidism two years prior to admission to the Philadelphia General Hospital on 2/24/33. She received roentgen-ray treatments over this entire period. Although the nervousness and palpitation were much improved, during the last six months she had noticed weakness, dyspnea, dryness of the skin, loss of hair, and swelling of face and legs. The skin became thickened and the nails brittle.

**PHYSICAL EXAMINATION** Exophthalmos and widening of the palpebral fissures were present. The thyroid was not palpable. Râles were present in both lung bases. A moderate bilateral pleural effusion was found. The heart rate was slow and the sounds distant. The borders could not be satisfactorily determined because of pleural fluid.

**LABORATORY DATA.** Urine showed a cloud of albumin, specific gravity 1.010. Blood: Hemoglobin 70 per cent (Sahli), Red blood cells, 2,300,000, White blood cells, 9,000, polymorphonuclears 53 per cent, lymphocytes 47 per cent, Kahn negative. Cholesterol 385. Basal metabolic rate, minus 30 per cent. The first electrocardiogram showed low voltage of QRS, prolongation of the P-R intervals to 0.28 seconds, and a left axis deviation. Two weeks later (Fig. 141A), marked alterations in the T-waves appeared, and a Q-wave in lead 3 was noted.

**PROGRESS.** The patient showed very little response to bed rest, diuretics, and cautious thyroid administration, and died suddenly six weeks later.

**AUTOPSY.** Thyroid: Considerable fibrosis was present and no thyroid tissue was visible in the section. The heart showed hypertrophy of all chambers. There was considerable sclerotic thickening of the mitral and aortic valves and extensive atheroma of the aorta.



A



B

FIG. 141. A. The electrocardiogram on admission. Note bradycardia, the low voltage of all waves and the flat T-waves. A record taken two weeks later following administration of thyroid shows increased voltage. The T-wave changes were probably caused by alterations in the blood flow to the heart muscle. B Atheroma of the aorta associated with hypothyroidism. (Autopsy No. 26,296. Philadelphia General Hospital.)

**Discussion.** Myxedema in the adult may be spontaneous or induced. The type that follows irradiation or surgical removal of all thyroid tissue (cachexia strumipriva) is much more common today. The roentgen-ray affects all thyroid cells and if the treatments are continued over a long period, may lead to a total suppression of the internal secretion. This patient had typical hyperthyroidism two years before admission. An excellent result was obtained at the start with irradiation, and the treat-

ment was continued over a longer period than was necessary with the development of hypothyroidism and later a frank myxedema.

High blood-cholesterol values are usually obtained in myxedema, and these may be seen to decrease after the administration of thyroid extract. The level of the blood cholesterol and the basal metabolic rate vary inversely. In non-toxic goiter, the blood cholesterol is normal, while in thyrotoxicosis and thyroid crisis, it is low. Consequently blood cholesterol determinations are valuable in diagnosis and in following the progress of treatment.

This patient's early death from coronary disease, the advanced degree of atheroma discovered at autopsy, and the high blood-cholesterol value that was associated with her myxedematous state, are more than coincidental. When the dangers of thyrotoxicosis were avoided, she developed the high blood cholesterol, which probably speeded up a sclerotic process already present. Blumgart has been unable to confirm this view and reports no evidence of rapidly progressing arteriosclerosis among the patients subjected to total thyroid ablation for relief of cardiac pain and congestive heart failure.<sup>34</sup>

#### MYXEOEMA COMPLICATED BY CORONARY ARTERIOSCLEROSIS—DEATH FOLLOWING SECOND ATTACK OF CORONARY THROMBOSIS

**Case 63.** N T., a bank clerk of 55, was first seen with his physician on November 10, 1939. At this time he showed all the typical signs and symptoms of myxedema. Two weeks before he had experienced a sudden attack of precordial pain in the middle of the night; this persisted for some hours and required a hypodermic injection of morphine for relief.

**PHYSICAL EXAMINATION.** B.P. 140/80. Pulse 55. There were noted a puffy face, sparse eyebrows, dry skin and thin hair (Fig. 142A). The heart sounds were distant, and soft systolic murmurs were heard over the apex and aortic area. The rhythm was regular. The heart was not enlarged to percussion.

**LABORATORY DATA.** The electrocardiogram showed low voltage, and in addition changes that suggested recent coronary occlusion (Fig. 142C). The roentgenogram showed slight cardiac enlargement (Fig. 142B). The blood cholesterol was 320 mg. The blood count was normal, urine and Wassermann negative. The basal metabolic rate was minus 42.

**CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS.** A. Etiologic: Myxedema B. Anatomic: Coronary sclerosis. Coronary occlusion, Cardiac infarction C. Physiologic: Sinus bradycardia. D. Functional Classification: Class 4. Therapeutic Classification: Class E.

**Discussion.** Means<sup>200</sup> believes that the occurrence of coronary thrombosis in myxedema is largely an accidental association. He states that persons who develop myxedema usually do so in the age periods when coronary thrombosis is also common, and he is not surprised that certain patients should have both diseases.

Some of the patients with myxedema have angina before thyroid treatment is begun. Others are free of pain until thyroid medication is pushed too fast for the caliber of the coronaries, and then seizures develop. The treatment in these cases consists in balancing the amount of daily thyroid ration to give the greatest relief from the symptoms of myxedema without aggravating the angina. Many times this dose will be under one

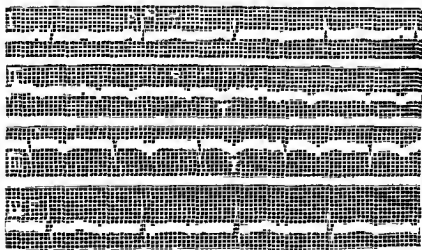
grain of thyroid gland a day. Nitroglycerine should be given as often as needed to control the angina.



A



B



C

FIG. 142. A, Myxedema. B, Roentgenogram shows slight cardiac enlargement. C, The electrocardiogram in myxedema. Note the low voltage of all waves. The S-T intervals in leads 2 and 3 show doming that is quite suggestive of old posterior coronary occlusion. Lead 4F is normal except for low voltage.

The association of arteriosclerosis with myxedema cannot fail to call to mind the relationship between diabetes and similar changes in the

coronary tree. In both diabetes and myxedema, arteriosclerosis is an early complication, and acute coronary occlusion often terminates the picture in each instance. Joslin believes that the problem of arteriosclerosis in diabetes will be solved if complete oxidation of fat is accomplished. High cholesterol values are found constantly in diabetes as well as in myxedema. With such a large cholesterol supply available in the blood stream, it is natural that investigators should conclude that this substance finds its way into the vessel walls and becomes concentrated in the spots where necrosis develops. Further support is given to this view by laboratory workers who have fed diets high in cholesterol to animals with the production of similar lesions.

Whether or not we make use of this experimental data in the management of our diabetic and myxedematous patients, we must admit that many problems (and secrets), physiologic, biologic, and pathologic, are closely linked to that fascinating chemical compound, cholesterol.

## CARDIAC ARRHYTHMIAS

Intelligent pulse palpation is an invaluable short cut to a great deal of information essential to the management of the cardiac patient. Moreover, there are important inferences which the pulse and only the pulse enable us to draw. While the rate, size, and compressibility of the pulse are important notations, rhythm deserves the most careful appraisal. Attention to a few fundamental rules and constant practice should enable every physician to diagnose the majority of the arrhythmias clinically, especially when pulse palpation is combined with careful auscultation of the heart. Needless to say, this is a great advantage in emergencies when the electrocardiograph is not available.

We can no longer state that the rhythm of the heart is "irregular" or "slightly irregular." The type of the arrhythmia should be put down, for it can be determined, with very little difficulty, by the general practitioner at the bedside. In fact, much of our present knowledge of the cardiac irregularities is a heritage from a country doctor, since the greatest part of the contributions of Sir James Mackenzie were made while he was in general practice at Burnley. Instruments of precision were perfected by him to test his theories, but when the many problems surrounding the arrhythmias were solved, he discarded the instruments and returned to continue his investigations at the bedside of the patient.

Irregularities in the rhythm are present many times in the absence of heart disease. However, the impression they make on the nervous system of the patient gives them a place of importance when treatment is planned. The patient whose nervous system is receptive to the stimuli of these abnormal beats is usually the patient who is constantly engaged in the palpation of the radial pulse. Consequently a harmless arrhythmia may be the starting point of a neurosis that eventually leads to as much ill health as an organic lesion.

A clear understanding of the arrhythmias comes with a thorough knowledge of the physiology of the cardiac mechanism (Chapter 24). Abnormalities of the cardiac action arise when the rate of impulse production is increased or decreased, when the impulse has its origin outside the regular sinus node or when disease processes block the normal distribution of the impulse. Before considering the treatment of the cardiac irregularities separately, a few general rules that may prove useful in their recognition will be mentioned.



## DIAGNOSIS

**Age Relations.** If an arrhythmia is present in a child under eight years of age, it is almost certainly sinus arrhythmia. Heart block, caused by a congenital defect in the septum, may be noted at birth, but it is rare (page 343). Auricular fibrillation is seldom present to complicate rheumatic or congenital lesions in the very young unless cardiac failure is imminent (page 348).

The cardiac rate is an important consideration in the diagnosis of any arrhythmia. Persisting and regular ventricular rates below 40 point to complete heart block. When a pulse rate over 140 suddenly appears in a patient at rest and continues at this level or higher for a space of hours to return suddenly to normal, a paroxysm of tachycardia or flutter is usually the mechanism. Pressure over the carotid sinus in the neck serves to differentiate, since it causes marked slowing in the ventricular rate if flutter is present, while if it has any effect at all on a paroxysm of tachycardia, it will stop it at once, and the pulse rate returns suddenly to normal.

**Premature Beats vs. Auricular Fibrillation.** If the heart's rhythm is irregular with a slow ventricular rate, it will require careful auscultation to differentiate between frequently recurring premature beats and auricular fibrillation. If the patient is exercised or given an inhalation of amyl nitrite to speed up the pulse, the differentiation is easy. With auricular fibrillation, the irregularity of the heart becomes more pronounced, while in the presence of premature contractions, the rhythm becomes rapid and entirely regular. It is unusual for premature beats to persist with pulse rates above 110.

**Alternation of the pulse** is a very important type of arrhythmia to diagnose because of the bearing it usually has on prognosis. Pulse palpation may suggest its presence, but it may be more readily demonstrated by using the sphygmomanometer (page 409).

A "skipped" or dropped beat at the wrist may be caused by premature contractions, heart block, or sinus arrest. The last two are rare. By listening over the precordium while palpating the carotid pulse, the sound of the premature beat may be detected, while precordial auscultation in patients who have heart block or sinus arrest reveals no extra sound during the pause. An electrocardiographic examination may be necessary to distinguish between heart block with dropped beats and sinus arrest, although in the presence of the former, various signs that point to cardiac disease, viz., enlargement of the heart, fever of a rheumatic process, etc., may be evident. Sinus arrest is more likely to occur in healthy hearts, while heart block never does.

**Bundle-branch block** may be suspected when a splitting of the first heart sound occurs in the presence of other evidences of cardiac disease.

It is usually caused in these instances by asynchronous contraction of the ventricles.

The symptoms that accompany the cardiac arrhythmias vary from the nervousness of the patient who experiences occasional premature beats to the coma and convulsions that are often seen in patients suffering from varying degrees of A-V heart block. The same irregularity in one person may cause no symptoms at all in the second. Even marked disturbances of cardiac rhythm such as auricular fibrillation may be unappreciated by the nervous systems of some individuals, while infrequent premature beats in susceptible patients may be accurately catalogued as to number and time of day of their occurrence.

In all cases it is important to secure a detailed description of the type of irregularity causing the disturbance. Many patients will give a description so characteristic that a diagnosis can be made on the history. The sensations described as "skippings," "pulsations," "heart turning over," "chokings" are nearly always due to premature beats. "Sudden racings" and "flutterings" are terms generally used to refer to paroxysms of rapid heart action.

Occasionally the sudden onset of a paroxysm of tachycardia may prove more than the myocardium of an elderly patient can stand, in which event the symptoms of congestive cardiac failure may quickly appear. The situation precipitated by the arrhythmia then assumes the nature of a medical emergency.

Regardless of the type of irregularity complained of, the final judgment in each case should rest on the result of complete physical examination. Particular attention should be given to the blood pressure, and the attempt should be made to demonstrate the presence of *pulsus alternans* if the clinical findings warrant the search. The jugular bulb should receive close attention and study. Many times the waves observed here reflect a type of auricular activity that permits definite conclusions to be made in regard to the nature of the arrhythmia. Careful precordial auscultation should be made during pulse palpation. Carotid sinus pressure should always be practiced and its effect on the irregularity noted. A careful evaluation of all the signs and symptoms of cardiac disease is always the deciding factor in estimating the importance of any arrhythmia and in planning management.

## SINUS MECHANISMS

### SINUS TACHYCARDIA

Case 64. M. R., a physician of 29, came to the hospital for a cardiac study because of tachycardia of three weeks' duration. The average rate was 110; onset and offset were gradual.

PHYSICAL EXAMINATION. B.P. 105/70. The heart was not enlarged. No murmurs were heard. The electrocardiogram that the patient requested revealed only a sinus tachycardia with a rate of 120. Further study, however, showed a temperature of 99.3° F. and an active tuberculous lesion at the right apex of the lung.

**Discussion.** The heart many times gives warning of trouble in a neighboring organ. This case history shows how dangerous it is to confine an examination to one region or organ of the body. The sinus tachycardia here, interpreted as heart disease, was the result of the toxemia and fever of an active tuberculosis.

Sinus tachycardia is likewise commonly produced by: overindulgence in tea, coffee, tobacco, and alcohol, gastro-intestinal tract disturbances, hemorrhage, shock, hyperthyroidism, and cardiac failure. The tachycardia of the latter condition is controlled by the regime described for congestive failure.

#### SINUS ARREST

**Case 65.** Miss E. J., a student of 17, was referred to the Cardiac Clinic of the Woman's College Hospital by a school physician because of a slow, irregular pulse. Rate 48. Occasionally dropped beats were palpated at the wrist. No precordial sound was heard on auscultation during the pauses. Cardiovascular symptoms were absent, and the past history was negative for rheumatic infection. The physical examination, except for the slow pulse and arrhythmia, was entirely negative.

**CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS.** Possible heart disease (patient with signs referable to the heart but in whom diagnosis of cardiac disease is uncertain). **Functional Classification:** Class 1. **Therapeutic Classification:** Class A. Electrocardiogram needed to establish the diagnosis.

**Discussion.** The electrocardiogram showed the presence of sinus arrest (See Fig. 180A). This girl was active in all forms of athletic activity, and at the time of the examination was engaged in a school hockey tournament. It is not uncommon for well-trained athletes to show these manifestations of an increase in vagal tone, consequently in this patient the bradycardia and sinus arrest were disregarded. The latter disappeared when tincture of belladonna was administered in full dosage over the course of one week. No treatment, of course, was indicated. A follow-up examination in three months showed that the sinus arrest had disappeared.

#### SINUS ARREST DURING THE COURSE OF ARTERIOSCLEROTIC HEART DISEASE

**Case 66.** R. S., a retired policeman of 67, was admitted to the Woman's College Hospital on 1/3/31 complaining of a sudden severe chest pain. The pulse was 40 and the rhythm irregular.

**PHYSICAL EXAMINATION.** B.P. 100/70. T. 99.2. Pallor and sweating were observed. Circulatory balance was quickly gained, but the pulse remained slow and irregular. No precordial friction rub appeared.

**LABORATORY DATA.** The orthodiagram was normal. Blood count, normal. Urinalysis negative. Blood Wassermann negative.

Electrocardiogram (see Fig. 180B): sinus arrest.

**CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS.** A. Etiologic Arteriosclerosis. B. Anatomic. Coronary sclerosis. Coronary occlusion (?) C. Physiologic: Sinus arrest. D. Functional Classification: Class 4. Therapeutic Classification: Class E.

**Discussion.** The slow pulse accompanying the sudden onset of chest pain suggested at first a posterior coronary occlusion, but an electrocardiogram showed the presence of sinus arrest instead of the expected complete A-V block. This suggested that the artery supplying the sinus node was

sinus, a slight swelling at the bifurcation of the common carotid artery at the upper level of the thyroid cartilage. The sinus nerve taking its origin in the wall of the carotid sinus is the afferent reflex pathway. It joins the glossopharyngeal nerve. Irritation of the wall of the carotid sinus causes two reflexes: the first produces slowing of the heart, while the second causes a fall in the blood pressure. The impulses to the heart that bring about the slowing are carried by the vagus nerve.

While this patient was in the hospital, it was discovered that both attacks of syncope occurred on sultry days when a very closely fitting stiff collar had been worn. Inquiry revealed that there had been a considerable gain in weight during the past year, and larger collars had not been purchased. The patient was accordingly advised to wear a soft type of collar. A weight-reduction program was advised. Large doses of thiamin chloride were prescribed, since recent studies have suggested that deficiency states induced by insufficient vitamin B<sub>1</sub> are often attended by hyperexcitability of the carotid sinus reflex. An abdominal belt was ordered and the patient was given capsules containing 25 mg. ( $\frac{3}{8}$  grain) of ephedrine sulfate to be taken as needed for vertigo. A year later this man reported no recurrence of the syncopal attacks and a weight loss of 10 pounds.

Females seem to be less subject to hyperexcitability of the carotid sinus reflex than males.<sup>308</sup> Local disease processes, most of them arteriosclerotic in nature, may produce excessive sensitiveness of this reflex arc by a lowering of the threshold of irritability. In some cases where the simpler measures outlined above are not effective in preventing attacks of syncope, a denervation of the carotid sinus is to be considered. I have seen several cases similar to the one whose history is outlined here, but have never been forced to advise surgical relief for the condition.

This patient's bradycardia persisted, and an average pulse rate of 55 was noted on many occasions subsequently. A slow pulse may have no significance, particularly in adults who have a hypersthenic build, while on the other hand, it may serve to attract attention to a serious cardiac defect, for example, heart block, auricular fibrillation or flutter. Flutter accompanied by a high degree of block may produce a slow ventricular rate. Auricular fibrillation likewise may have a high degree of block which will result in a slow pulse, although if carefully studied, the pulse will also be found to be irregular.

Abnormalities in the formation or conduction of the cardiac impulse may produce a slow pulse. Sinus arrest, as we have just seen, is an example of this kind. The pulse may be slow in partial or complete heart block.

Certain toxic states may be responsible for bradycardia. For example, it is often produced by the action of digitalis, and it frequently accompanies icterus. Following certain infections, notably typhoid fever and influenza, bradycardia may appear and be quite pronounced. The severe toxic state accompanying uremia also produces a slowing of the pulse. Intracranial lesions like tumor, hemorrhage, or concussion commonly cause sinus bradycardia.

Bradycardia is frequently met in hypothyroidism or myxedematous states, consequently a determination of the basal metabolic rate is indicated in patients who have bradycardia and suggestive clinical findings. The low metabolic rate is responsible for the slow pulse rate; both show an increase when thyroid extract is given. Finally, a slow pulse may be present in patients with aortic stenosis. Here a physical examination of the heart serves to differentiate.

The management of bradycardia depends upon the cause. A slow heart is not necessarily an inefficient heart, since many times in cases of complete heart block the patient can carry on for years with a pulse rate that is constantly between 30 and 40.

### SINUS ARRHYTHMIA

Case 68. Master R. S., age six, was referred to the Cardiac Clinic of the Woman's College Hospital because of an irregularity of the cardiac rhythm coming on shortly after a tonsillectomy. There were no symptoms referable to the heart. No murmurs were present, and an orthodiagram showed the heart to be well within the limits of normal in size and shape. The electrocardiogram (see Fig. 194) showed the pulse irregularity to be due to sinus arrhythmia.

Discussion. Sinus arrhythmia, following alterations in the vagal tone, is the most common irregularity in children. Mackenzie referred to it as "the youthful type of irregularity." Occasionally the condition may be so marked that unless the patient is carefully examined fibrillation may be suspected. Sinus arrhythmia may be recognized by noting its relationship to the different phases of respiration. It is abolished by atropine, which paralyzes the vagal endings in the heart and produces a more rapid regular heart rate. Sinus arrhythmia is physiologic, and no treatment, of course, is required.

### PREMATURE CONTRACTIONS (EXTRASYSTOLES)

The occasional occurrence of extrasystoles is compatible with a long and healthy life. After 50 they are as insignificant as gray hairs, and, if the rest of the examination of the cardiovascular apparatus is negative, they should be disregarded. Extrasystoles arise from impulses generated outside the sinus node acting on the heart muscle after the refractory period is ended, but before the arrival of the next impulse from the pacemaker. These beats are easily recognized clinically by noting the occasional intermission in the radial pulse, at the same time ausculting over the precordium where the extra beat will be heard.

The premature beat is generally a weaker beat, following the regular contraction. It is weak because it occurs at so short an interval after the normal beat, allowing the ventricle less than the usual time for filling. The output of the heart following the premature beat is less for the same reason; in fact, some beats may be so weak that the aortic valves do not open. The compensatory pause gives ample time for ventricular filling, consequently the next beat is stronger than normal, and this directs the patient's

attention to the heart and accounts for the complaints of "thumping in the chest," "choking," etc.

### ORIGIN

Premature beats may originate in any part of the heart: the auricular muscle, the ventricular muscle or the A-V nodal tissues. They may occur at any age from a number of intrinsic and extrinsic causes ranging from a cup of coffee to a coronary occlusion. Usually it may be said that the younger the patient, the more infrequent is this form of arrhythmia, and when it does occur, the more likely it is to arise from actual myocardial disease.

Auricular premature contractions can usually be distinguished from those of ventricular origin by the compensatory pause. In ventricular premature beats the pause is fully compensatory; if the beat is auricular or nodal, the pause is not compensatory.

Premature beats may occur infrequently in some patients, in which event their recognition is easy. In other patients many premature beats may occur in the course of a minute; in these cases the irregular rhythm may closely simulate auricular fibrillation. Premature beats may occur after each normal beat (*pulsus bigeminus*) or after each second normal beat (*pulsus trigeminus*). In rare instances the premature beat may occur between two normal beats without altering the basic rhythm (See Fig. 201A). The latter is known as an interpolated beat. Here the term, "extrasystole" may be correctly applied.

### ILLUSTRATIVE CASES

#### POST-TRAUMATIC CARDIAC NEUROSIS—SIGNIFICANCE OF MULTIPLE PREMATURE CONTRACTIONS

Case 69. Miss E. F., a typist of 46, complained of frequent "pulse skipplings" following hospitalization for injuries caused by an automobile accident. Examination showed a blood pressure of 140/80, frequent premature beats, no murmurs, and no cardiac enlargement. The Wassermann and other laboratory examinations were negative. The periods were scant before the accident, and following the accident the menses were absent.

Discussion. The discovery of the presence of the premature beats by this patient following an automobile accident was (to use her own words) "a terrifying experience." When first examined all the chest sensations that usually accompany these interruptions in the cardiac rhythm were described in detail. At each subsequent visit the patient brought a detailed record that demonstrated at least an increasing skill in pulse palpation.

The age, mannerisms, menstrual history, physical examination, type of cardiac irregularity, and voluminous charts made of the "skipplings" all suggested the functional nature of the cardiac complaint in this patient. Treatment was begun by frankly telling her that no evidence of any

heart disease could be detected outside of the irregularity. The premature beats were recorded and the tracing was shown to the patient, while the many factors operative in producing them in her case were reviewed. She was instructed not to palpate her radial pulse, to avoid fatigue, and to get more rest at night. To this end she was given a tablet of sodium bromide 1.0 Gm. (15 grains) in water after meals. Tobacco, tea, coffee, and alcohol were eliminated.

The premature beats became much less noticeable and annoying after a week on this regime, although examination showed that they were still present. At this stage in the treatment the patient was advised to get more out-of-door exercise. She chose walks in the country and was not long in noticing that exertion caused the premature beats to disappear. The walks were beneficial, and she began to sleep better at night; and when she was next seen at the end of two weeks, improvement was reported. A final help was given to her at this time in the form of a capsule of quinidine sulfate, 120 mg. (2 grains) when it was determined that no reaction followed the initial dose of this drug. She was instructed to take one or two of these capsules when the premature beats became annoying during working hours.

Search for foci of infection is most important in the management of patients of this type. It must not be forgotten that an infected gallbladder can cause these disorders of rhythm, which promptly disappear following operation in many instances (Chapter 17).

The relationship between the accident and the onset of the extrasystoles in this patient has medicolegal significance, since it brings up the subject of cardiac trauma (page 486). We must admit, however, that here the stage was set for the occurrence of the premature beats before the accident, and trauma should only be viewed as another provoking factor. Extrasystoles may follow cardiac injury, but they may also occur in the absence of any myocardial damage. Their occurrence in this case is by no means proof in itself of damage to the cardiac structure by the accident.

#### PREMATURE VENTRICULAR CONTRACTIONS ASSOCIATED WITH HYPERTENSIVE HEART DISEASE

**Case 70.** Mrs. R. E., a housewife of 60, when first seen complained chiefly of palpitation caused by frequent irregularities in cardiac action. The patient was overweight, showed an elevation of the blood pressure (190/110), cardiac enlargement of the hypertensive type, a systolic apical murmur, and beginning congestive cardiac failure. The electrocardiogram is shown in Fig. 201B.

**Discussion.** The premature beats also comprised the chief complaint of this patient, but examination showed the presence of cardiac damage. They were successfully treated by rest and slow digitalization. Elixir of phenobarbital (N.F.) in 5 cc. doses after meals was given for a few days to decrease the apprehension of the patient while measures were instituted for the control of the congestive failure by digitalis. With improvement in the circulatory status, the premature beats disappeared.

## THE PAROXYSMAL TACHYCARDIAS

## A-V NODAL PAROXYSMAL TACHYCARDIA IN THE ABSENCE OF OTHER EVIDENCE OF HEART DISEASE

*Case 71.* E. W., a sales executive of 37, was first seen in November, 1934 complaining of attacks of rapid heart action. The rate averaged 150 per minute, the onset and offset were abrupt and attacks were usually associated with some digestive disturbance. Physical examination showed no cardiac enlargement, no murmurs, and a normal blood pressure. The past medical history was negative except for hay fever. Wassermann negative. The electrocardiogram showed auriculoventricular nodal tachycardia (Fig. 206A).

**Discussion.** Paroxysmal tachycardia, first described by Cotton in 1867, is caused by a succession of premature beats or extrasystoles emanating from a focus in the auricle, the A-V node or the ventricle. It is a rare arrhythmia, occurring only 17 times in 3000 consecutive electrocardiograms at the Woman's College Hospital. Of these, five were of the auricular variety, nine of the nodal, and three of the ventricular. The auricular and nodal paroxysms occurred in ambulatory clinic patients, while the ventricular forms were present in ward patients exhibiting signs of advanced heart disease.

In most patients who have the supraventricular types of tachycardia, no heart disease can be demonstrated, although in some, well-compensated rheumatic or arteriosclerotic lesions may be present. Occasionally the paroxysms are associated with toxic foci, particularly in the gall-bladder, the elimination of which may be the master stroke in therapy. In patients with varying degree of A-V block, a prefibrillary type of ventricular tachycardia may be observed during Adams-Stokes seizures (page 618). Ventricular tachycardia may occur as a sign of the toxic action of digitalis.

This patient gave a history of attacks of rapid heart action for a period of years, but when their frequency increased, he became alarmed and came to the hospital for study. The fact that he had no other evidence of cardiac disease was first established. The roentgen findings were negative, and the electrocardiogram following a seizure (See Fig. 206B) was likewise within the limits of normal. During his short stay in the hospital many attacks were observed. Some were readily controlled by vagus or carotid-sinus pressure; others showed a tendency to resist all treatment for hours.

A striking fact in the past history of this patient was the presence of seasonal hay fever beginning about August fifteenth of each year. Paroxysms were more frequent at this time but also occurred at other seasons of the year. A history of allergy in these cases warrants a complete study (Chapter 16).

**Quinidine.** One of the most reliable remedies when the paroxysms tend to be prolonged in the absence of organic heart disease, is quinidine sulfate, the dextrorotary isomer of quinine. Wenckebach, in 1917, first noted that quinine in malarial patients often abolished an existing fibrillation of the auricles, while in 1918 Frey found that quinidine possessed the same gen-



eral actions as quinine but exhibited a more intense and selective action on the heart.

Quinidine sulfate is a very soluble drug and is rapidly absorbed from the gastro-intestinal tract, its action becoming manifest about 20 minutes after administration. It is likewise rapidly eliminated, a fact which has a direct bearing on the amount and frequency of the prescribed dose.

Quinidine lengthens the refractory period of the cardiac muscle and depresses the conduction rate. Consequently the drug does not cure disease—it merely smooths out the cardiac action and enables the normal pacemaker in the sinus node to gain control of the rhythm. Quinidine is therefore useful in paroxysmal tachycardias, extrasystoles, auricular flutter, and in certain selected cases of auricular fibrillation. It is most satisfactory in its action when the heart is otherwise sound or the damage, if present, is not extreme.

Quinidine is best administered in capsule form. It is most important to give a test dose of 0.2 Gm. (3 grains) of the drug a few hours before therapy is begun unless the emergency is extreme. This initial or test dose in some cases may prove sufficient to abolish the paroxysm. If not, in four hours, a 0.3 Gm. (5 grains) capsule may be given and continued at this interval during the next 24 hours. If toxic signs do not appear and the paroxysm persists, the dose may be doubled and given at the same interval the next day.

Gastro-intestinal tract symptoms may be the first manifestations of untoward effects of quinidine; nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea appear early in some cases. Fulness in the head followed by headache, vertigo, ringing in the ears and in rare cases deafness are symptoms occasionally seen in some patients; in such circumstances the drug should be withdrawn. Toxic cardiac symptoms consisting of short runs of tachycardia, frequent premature beats or intraventricular block are rare. Respiratory distress has been observed to follow large doses. Cutaneous eruptions, urticarial, petechial or scarlatinal in nature have been reported. Embolism has followed the ill-advised use of quinidine in cases of advanced mitral stenosis in the presence of some degree of congestive failure. This complication of quinidine therapy is discussed in connection with the treatment of auricular fibrillation (page 394).

Occasionally quinidine sulfate may be given intravenously, if the emergency is extreme, in doses of 0.2 to 0.4 Gm. dissolved in 30 to 60 cc. of physiological saline. Some brilliant results have been reported following its administration by this route, but I have never had to resort to it. It is almost always possible to give quinidine by mouth in the treatment of paroxysmal tachycardias of auricular or nodal origin.

Quinidine sulfate 0.3 Gm. (5 grains) every four hours was sufficient to curtail temporarily the paroxysm in this patient. We were very much interested in him, and when he left the hospital a few days later, he was requested to keep in touch with us and continue the quinidine as a prophylactic measure until he could arrange the time for a more extended

investigation. Consequently on his journeys he kept us well informed. Communications came from various sections of the country and reflected the attempts made to meet the question of therapy in paroxysmal tachycardia. They were written by a patient of high intelligence, and I believe the details reported in them to be accurate. Therefore, I am including the following excerpts, unchanged:

Boston, Mass.

November 7, 1934

When I left the College Hospital, I took a train for Boston. Toward morning I had a very severe attack and could not continue at work that day, so I went to Dr. — who put electrodes on me again (I am getting used to them by this time) and then gave me two teaspoonsful of wine of ipecac. This stopped the attack all right, but I vomited for 24 hours. I do not feel as if I have any stomach left. Perhaps the purpose of this treatment was to get rid of my stomach and drop my heart down in its place in the hope that it would behave better amid unaccustomed surroundings. Seriously, I would rather have the tachycardia, as you call it, than vomit my — head off.

The production of vomiting is a most effective way to end an attack. Putting the finger down the throat to induce gagging often suffices. Apomorphine has been suggested for the same reason. In this instance the ipecac was effective when carotid sinus pressure failed. The patient's opinion expressed so frankly in the above letter must always be respected before repeating this remedy in the same dosage.

Buffalo, N. Y.

November 29, 1934

I was fairly well after my vomiting stopped and was able to get some work done. I took one of your capsules (quinidine sulfate) after each meal. In a week my ears began to ring and when I could stand it no longer, I went to see an ear specialist in this city who told me the nerve of hearing had been permanently damaged by the medicine I was taking and advised me to stop it. However, the ringing continued (It's Armistice Day every day with me) and two days ago I had another attack. . . .

The onset of cinchonism was a real indication for the withdrawal of the quinidine. Tinnitus and sometimes deafness following quinidine therapy are not uncommon and may appear, as in this case, at a later date, following prolonged administration. A drug idiosyncrasy might be expected in an individual of this type although permanent harm rarely results from the use of quinidine. Relief has followed cessation of the medication in patients that I have seen. Certainly continuous quinidine therapy is not to be recommended for those patients whose attacks occur at long intervals. In cases like the one under discussion, however, I think that it was indicated

because of the frequency of the seizures and the amount of disability they caused.

Chicago, Ill.

December 1, 1934

The radio business is improving, but last week after working for two days straight, I had another bad attack. When the eye pressure and the neck "hocus-pocus" failed again, I did not have the nerve to start up the vomiting, so went to see an M.D. in this city. I told him that I had to have relief from the spell, and he said that he would use a new drug that would stop it right away. It did, but let me say that it was some experience! I was given an injection in the arm and in about two minutes, I was as red as a lobster and could hardly get my breath. I thought that my last hour had arrived and although there is nothing at all unusual about dying in Chicago, it seemed a horrible way to meet my end. . . .

The new drug mentioned by our trusting traveler was most certainly acetyl-beta-methylcholin chloride (mecholy). Popularized by Starr and his workers, it has been used in the treatment of the paroxysmal tachycardias since 1933. It is effective on subcutaneous injection in doses ranging from 20 mg. (1/3 grain) to 40 mg. (2/3 grain), depending on the age and weight of the patient. Under 20 years of age an initial dose of 10 mg. (1/6 grain) should be sufficient to terminate the attack. Obese patients usually require the maximum dosage. If the attack continues for a minute after the appearance of the flush described in the above letter (so characteristic of the drug), the site of the injection should be massaged to hasten absorption. If this is ineffective, the stimulation of the carotid sinus should be tried again, for this procedure is sometimes successful if repeated after injection of mecholy. The drug may be given orally in 60 mg. to 1.0 Gm. (1 to 15 grains) doses, which are followed by a slower and milder action, and the flushing may fail to appear.

Mecholy occurs as fine white crystals which are hygroscopic and freely soluble in water. The solution is stable to heat and has a bitter taste. Mecholy was discovered when search was made for a choline derivative more suitable for clinical use than acetylcholine and lacking its nicotine-like action. Choline and acetylcholine have been known for many years, and recently it has been shown that acetylcholine is the actual chemical substance released in the muscles when parasympathetic nerves are stimulated.

Mecholy lowers the blood pressure, slows the cardiac rate, causes constriction of the bronchioles (accounting for the asthma), stimulates the sweat glands, increases peristalsis, and dilates the peripheral blood vessels. Its action in stimulating the parasympathetic nerves may be described as antagonistic to adrenalin. The possibility of making to order other similar drugs possessing a variety of such selective actions upon the various nerves

and ganglia of the human body suggests a busy future for the therapeutic engineers.

Because of the untoward effects that are sometimes produced by mecholyl, a hypodermic syringe containing atropine sulfate 1 mg. (1/60 grain) should be kept handy whenever the drug is used. Atropine abolishes the effect of mecholyl and in emergencies may be used intravenously. The side effects of mecholyl such as salivation, sweating, and general discomfort Starr considers to be more than compensated for by the relief from the attack. I consider them so disturbing that I reserve mecholyl until all other measures to terminate an attack have failed. When the prolonged, rapid heart rates seriously affect myocardial function, I have used mecholyl. Each time I have been forced to follow with atropine (page 457).

Mecholyl may cause the inversion of the T-wave of the electrocardiogram in some patients. When successfully used for an attack of paroxysmal tachycardia, the transition from the abnormal rhythm to sinus rhythm is seen. This transition may be attended by prolonged conduction, short periods of asystole and premature contractions. The same effects can be produced by vagal stimulation.

Bloom and Cashion<sup>22</sup> observed a very severe reaction following the intravenous injection of 10 mg. (1/6 grain) of mecholyl used to stop a paroxysm of auricular flutter. Normal rhythm was restored following the appearance of heart block and ventricular tachycardia, but they nearly lost their patient. Mecholyl should never be used intravenously. In cases of ordinary paroxysms that give a previous history of spontaneous cessation, where the patient is young and the myocardium in good condition, mecholyl should not be used.

Let us return from this digression to the recorded experiences of this interesting patient.

Los Angeles, Cal.  
February 5, 1935

I am sorry not to have written to you before this, but have been busy here—in the rain. Since it received its volley in Chicago, my heart behaved pretty well until two weeks ago. After several flare-ups, I went to an M.D. in this city and now you will have *the real diagnosis!* I have a form of intoxication arising in my intestinal tract. This doctor has actually visualized the inhabitants, and my flora are far from correct. There are twice as many germs of one kind present. The effect of this inequality in the population in this sector is reflected in my cardiac kick-ups. I am taking irrigations three times a week for the colon and quantities of a special kind of milk that is charged with reinforcements for the germs that are losing the battle for me. Soon all will be right again. By the time it stops raining, I expect to be cured.

Our patient at this stage seems to be in an optimistic mood. At least the therapy now seems to be directed toward trying to discover the cause of

the attacks of paroxysmal tachycardia instead of seeking new remedies to abolish individual seizures. The presence of hay fever and the occurrence of attacks following gastro-intestinal upsets are more than coincidental. My impression was that the offending allergin was a food (Chapter 16). However, in the form of therapy now described by the patient, the old idea of auto-intoxication seems to be the guiding principle. I could never generate much enthusiasm over the various methods of treatment that have risen to popularity since the *Bacillus bulgaricus* took the stage in spite of the fact that many ills are seemingly cured or avoided, and longevity stands as a glowing reward at the end of the trail. The one type of intestinal flora may be replaced by another acid-producing type, but it is a far cry from this fact to the proof that products of intestinal putrefaction are absorbed in sufficient quantities to affect the cardiac mechanism with the production of paroxysms of tachycardia.

St. Louis, Mo.

April 15, 1935

I am still able to keep going but am definitely finished with all doctors. My attacks after all the treatment I have received in different cities of the country are about the same as they were when I stopped in to see you in Philadelphia. My heart continues its temperamental career. It does its stunts at the most inconvenient times. Last week I had a spell during an examination for life insurance, and the company would not issue a \$10,000 increase. I have spent a sizable sum on doctors during the past year and if all the electrocardiograms I have had taken were collected and placed end to end, they would form a cardiac race course reaching from here to Philadelphia. I am going to be my own doctor for a while, for I certainly cannot be much worse than I am now. . . .

A discouraged patient! However, it is not entirely the fault of the physicians he has seen, for he has not stayed in one place long enough for a thorough study to be made. The therapy has been mainly for the seizures, and the patient's manner of living in itself plays no small part in producing these frequent recurrences.

Cincinnati, Ohio

June 19, 1936

No doubt you have forgotten all about me by this time, but I think that you ought to know how I finally obtained relief from my attacks. I did not take any medicine or see any doctors for six months after I last wrote to you. I had to continue at work, but the attacks came on so often that I was quite miserable most of the time and lost considerable weight. Last October while I was motoring through a small town in Ohio, I decided to apply for medical aid once more. This time, instead of choosing a specialist who would have taken another dozen feet of film of my

heart beat and have gazed at me through a fluoroscope, I walked into the office of a general practitioner. I told my story again, and the old man was able to see me in one of my spells. He then reached in the drawer of his desk and from among other things pulled out a handful of digitalis pills (that you had always told me I did not need) and advised me to take one after each meal for five days and then one every day. He told me to take a two weeks' vacation and return at the end of that time to see him. I followed his instructions to the letter, chiefly because he did not order a couple of dozen laboratory tests and puncture me with a hypodermic needle or try to force an entrance into some region of my body with a pipe line. During those two weeks, I did not have a single attack. When I saw him again, he told me to take one of the pills every day and go back to work. I have not had a spell for eight months, and I am sure that I am cured. . . .

Many times I have advised my surgical friends not to administer digitalis when their patients, emerging from the anesthetic, happen to have one of these attacks of paroxysmal tachycardia to which they may have been subject for years. I try to demonstrate the quiet breathing, the lack of any sign of congestive failure, the dry lung, and the normal temperature. Even the serene countenance of the patient fails to convince the worried surgeon, and when I return to the ward the next day, I generally note that digitalis has been continued until the abrupt cessation of the abnormal rhythm. *Post hoc ergo propter hoc* is a belief not entirely confined to lay circles. However, I still preach the doctrine that digitalis is poor therapy for this group of patients who have paroxysms of tachycardia when they have otherwise normal hearts. A letter like this one forces me to admit the exception. In a small group, when all other measures fail, complete digitalization with the continuance of maintenance dosage may bring relief. The country doctor tried this and succeeded. He was most up-to-date in his method of using digitalis and in establishing proper maintenance allowance over a long period. He was also able during the course of one visit to gain the patient's confidence and insist on a vacation. The rest played no small part in the "cure."

Paroxysmal tachycardia is rarely met in children. Tarran and Jennings<sup>372</sup> report 52 cases in literature from 1892 to 1935 in patients under 15. In a patient recently reported by Wright,<sup>423</sup> 17 paroxysms were observed in a child of six years who had an otherwise normal heart. Many of these were immediately terminated by 5 mg. doses of mechoyl administered hypodermically. There was a strong emotional factor in this Jewish child inasmuch as the paroxysms did not occur while she was in a convalescent hospital but immediately reappeared upon her return to the environment of her home. I recently observed a paroxysm of auricular tachycardia in a Jewish child of five that lasted two weeks and resisted all forms of therapy that have been described. Studies made during and after the

seizure showed a normal heart. Food allergy was the background suspected in this case.

### PAROXYSMAL VENTRICULAR TACHYCARDIA COMPLICATING ACUTE CORONARY OCCLUSION

**Case 72.** F. C., an unemployed accountant of 56, was well except for the presence of elevated blood pressure for some years, until an hour before admission to the hospital. At this time, following a heavy meal he had a sudden attack of severe precordial pain radiating to both sides of the neck. It was promptly followed by vomiting and collapse. *When seen in the receiving ward, the patient was in shock with a pulse so rapid that it was impossible to count the rate accurately.* Death occurred while the tracing shown in Fig. 245 was being taken.

**CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS** A. Etiologic. Hypertension. B. Anatomic. Cardiac enlargement. Acute coronary occlusion. C. Physiologic: Paroxysmal ventricular tachycardia. D. Functional Classification. Class 4.

**Discussion.** Paroxysmal ventricular tachycardia is a much more serious arrhythmia and generally occurs in the presence of grave heart disease. It is not infrequently associated with coronary accidents similar to the one described above. Slight irregularities in the rhythm may serve to make the diagnosis at the bedside and differentiate from paroxysmal auricular tachycardia. Paroxysmal auricular tachycardia is characterized by its absolute regularity. Careful auscultation in patients with ventricular tachycardia may also reveal alterations in the heart sounds that are important in the differential diagnosis. In ventricular tachycardia the first heart sound will occasionally vary in intensity. It may be louder with some beats and reduplicated in others due to the varying positions of auricular systole in the cardiac cycle.

Vagal stimulation and the other measures suggested for paroxysmal auricular tachycardia have no effect in ventricular tachycardia. Digitalis is valueless; in fact it may even increase the rate in some cases. The drug of choice in this emergency is quinidine. It is effectual because the arrhythmia is in all likelihood caused by a circus movement in the ventricle. This mechanism may be rapidly fatal unless treatment is prompt. In these emergencies quinidine should be given intravenously (page 384) before the sudden burden of the arrhythmia on an already damaged myocardium terminates the picture.

### AURICULAR FLUTTER

In auricular flutter the impulse for cardiac contraction arises from a wave that follows a regular path around the auricular musculature at a speed of 260 to 310 revolutions a minute. The pulse rate in flutter depends upon the ability of the ventricles to respond to the rapid succession of stimuli it receives from this abnormal auricular wave. At times this response is one to one, but more commonly a ventricular contraction follows the stimulus of every second or third revolution of the circus movements in the auricle. The onset of flutter is abrupt. It may persist for a short while as a paroxysm or may continue unchecked for months or years.

When flutter disappears, it may be replaced by either fibrillation or normal rhythm.

Flutter is a rare disorder encountered only 20 times in the first 3000 electrocardiograms taken at the Cardiac Clinic of the Woman's College Hospital. Flutter may be observed in otherwise normal hearts or may complicate rheumatic, arteriosclerotic or thyroid heart disease. Occasionally other toxic states of the myocardium may be responsible for its appearance.

The pathologist finds no characteristic auricular lesion in cases of flutter, but this should not be surprising inasmuch as it is usually brought about by a reduction in the refractory period of the muscle which permits continuous passage of the original contraction wave. The clinical symptoms produced by the sudden onset of auricular flutter vary. Rarely there may be none at all, and the condition may be brought to light at a routine examination. In other cases the ventricular rate is too rapid to count, particularly where a one to one response occurs. In these cases the tax on the cardiac reserve is great, and if myocardial disease is present, signs of congestive failure may appear rapidly. Unconsciousness from cerebral anemia in some cases has been reported. Fortunately, the ventricles do not respond to each stimulus but to every second or third revolution of the flutter wave in the auncle, in which event the pulse rate will be about 150 beats per minute. The response of the ventricle will occasionally vary, every second, third or fourth stimulus getting through the junctional tissues and producing an irregular pulse resembling fibrillation. Usually, however, the pulse is rapid and regular. When the attack is over, the ventricular rate will fall suddenly to normal, and any symptoms that may have been present will disappear quickly.

A history of a rapid ventricular rate in a middle-aged or elderly patient, sudden in onset and present for some weeks, suggests auricular flutter. If carotid-sinus pressure slows the ventricular rate, the diagnosis can be made with certainty. Exercise may speed up the ventricular rate in flutter and make the rhythm regular; the opposite is true in fibrillation. Flutter can be distinguished from a paroxysm of tachycardia on the basis of the ventricular rate. The simple paroxysmal tachycardias usually have higher ventricular rates (180 to 230).

## ILLUSTRATIVE CASES

### PAROXYSMAL AURICULAR FLUTTER IN AN OTHERWISE NORMAL HEART

*Case 73.* H. T., a male laborer of 46, was first seen January 10, 1935 complaining of vertigo and precordial oppression, accompanying the sudden onset of a rapid heart rate. Except for the history of peptic ulcer, the patient had been well until a month before the onset of the attack when he developed pains in the shoulders, arms and back. Although vigorously treated by his physician with salicylates and barking, he became worse and was unable to work. On purely empirical grounds, he was placed on sulfanilamide therapy. After three doses of 1 Gm. each, he developed nausea, slight cyanosis, and sudden rapid cardiac rate. On admission the pulse was 150 in all positions. More rapid auricular pulsations were noted in the neck veins. The heart size was not increased, and the sounds



were of good quality. No murmurs were heard. The blood pressure was 100/80. Wassermann, blood sugar, complete blood count, and blood urea were normal.

CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS. A. Etiologic. Unknown (Toxic from sulfanilamide?). B. Anatomic. No cardiac enlargement. C. Physiologic: Auricular flutter. D. Functional Classification. Class 1. Therapeutic Classification: Class C.

Discussion. On admission the tracing (Fig. 143B) showed typical auricular flutter with a two to one ventricular response. The patient was in

A

B

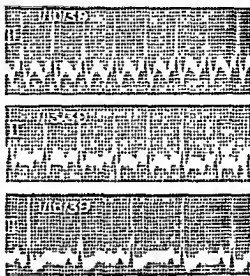


FIG. 143 A. Roentgenogram of chest. The cardiac silhouette is normal in size and shape. B. The electrocardiogram. Examination made on 10/1/39 shows presence of auricular flutter with a 2:1 ventricular response. The next strip from the same lead three days later following the administration of 0.9 gram ( $13\frac{1}{2}$  grains) whole leaf of digitalis. Three days later (1/16/39) after 1.8 grams (27 grains) of digitalis whole leaf had been given, the drug was discontinued. Normal rhythm is now present. Note depression of the S-T intervals.

good condition in spite of the continuation of the rapid ventricular rate; consequently it was decided to digitalize him slowly. The next tracing was taken three days later, after nine tablets each containing 100 mg. ( $1\frac{1}{2}$  grains) of whole leaf of digitalis had been given. When a total of 18 tablets had been given, the digitalis was stopped, and normal rhythm appeared spontaneously.

Administration of digitalis usually abolishes auricular flutter by converting it into auricular fibrillation. In this patient we see a return to normal rhythm without the intervening fibrillation. However, there may have been a very short period of fibrillation following the disappearance of the flutter that was not observed. Since large doses of digitalis are needed to produce an effect in the presence of auricular flutter, the patient should be kept under constant observation while the drug is being given. Warnings such as anorexia and a slight nausea may be overlooked, but the ap-

pearance of frequent premature beats in the tracing should always be considered a signal of the approach of dangerous toxic rhythms. The digitalis should then be stopped. Normal rhythm usually returns. If there is no restoration of sinus rhythm in one week in patients who show no signs of mitral disease or auricular enlargement, quinidine may be considered. The patient now under discussion would have been an excellent case for quinidine therapy if normal rhythm had not returned following digitalization. Likewise, if forced to abandon the use of digitalis because of the appearance of toxic symptoms, quinidine may be begun in a few days. After the usual preliminary test dose of 0.2 Gm. (3 grains), a 0.3 Gm. (5 grains) capsule is given every four hours (four times daily). If this does not restore normal rhythm in three days, it can be given five times daily. If there is still no effect, the dose can be increased every two days until a total of 2.6 Gm. (40 grains) a day is reached. In extreme emergencies where the abnormal rhythm is threatening life, this amount may be exceeded in an attempt to restore sinus rhythm and save the myocardium. In less urgent cases it is not wise to exceed 2.0 Gm. to 2.6 Gm. (30 to 40 grains) of quinidine daily. Where the paroxysm of flutter is successfully abolished by the use of quinidine, it is essential to continue the drug in maintenance dosage of 0.3 Gm. (5 grains) three times daily. In patients who have mitral disease and a large left auricle, it is a wiser course to accept the fibrillation and efficiently control the ventricular rate by digitalis.

With the exception of a report of a transient nodal rhythm by Dozzi<sup>81</sup> following an initial dose of 5.4 Gm. (80 grains) of sulfanilamide, I am not aware of any reports in the literature of the appearance of toxic rhythms following this commonly used drug. Considering the amount of the drug that must be consumed by all types of ambulatory and hospitalized patients, if cardiac manifestations are common, we would have seen more instances during the past years. This patient and the patient of Case 77 are the only ones that I have encountered where the relationship between the onset of the arrhythmia and the exhibition of sulfanilamide suggested the possibility of toxic action. In both cases the appearance of a paroxysm closely followed ingestion of the drug, and in each instance the paroxysm was the only sign of heart disease encountered after complete studies were made. *Certainly fear of any cardiac complication should not deter us in the rational use of sulfanilamide or its derivatives.*

#### AURICULAR FLUTTER ACCOMPANYING RHEUMATIC HEART DISEASE

**Case 74.** Mrs. E. G., a housewife of 29, when first seen was complaining of palpitation and rapid heart action. She gave a history of two attacks of rheumatic fever. Examination showed a pulse of 150. BP. 110/74. The orthodiagram suggested the presence of mitral stenosis and regurgitation, although the physical signs were not conclusive in the presence of such a rapid cardiac rate. The electrocardiogram showed auricular flutter (see Fig. 228).

**CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS.** A. Etiologic: Rheumatic. (Inactive). B. Anatomic: Cardiac hypertrophy. Mitral stenosis. Mitral regurgitation. C. Physiologic: Auricular flutter. **Functional Classification:** Class 1. **Therapeutic Classification:** Class C.

**Discussion.** When this patient was first examined her ventricular rate was 150. There was no decrease in her exercise tolerance, the lung fields were clear, and her color was excellent. She was given a tablet of the whole leaf of digitalis 0.1 Gm. (1½ grains) after each meal for one week (weight 140) and was allowed to be out of bed but not out of the house during this time. At the end of one week the pulse was slower and totally irregular. An electrocardiogram (see Fig. 228B) showed that fibrillation had replaced the flutter, consequently the digitalis was entirely withdrawn and the patient instructed to return in another week. At the third visit, normal rhythm was present (see Fig. 228C). At least half of the cases of auricular flutter, when similarly treated, will show a return to normal rhythm in this classical fashion.

If advanced mitral stenosis is present and normal rhythm does not appear, it is far better to continue the digitalis in daily maintenance dosage, particularly if the ventricular rate is well controlled, rather than attempt to restore normal rhythm by the use of quinidine. If successful and sinus rhythm returns, it soon gives way again to flutter or fibrillation; so there is less risk if the ventricular rate of fibrillation is reduced and maintained at 70 beats per minute by digitalis.

When this patient was examined a year later, flutter had returned (Fig. 228D). This time when fibrillation was produced, the digitalis was continued in maintenance dosage. The rest of this patient's treatment was governed by subsequent developments in the course of her rheumatic heart disease (Chapter 3).

## AURICULAR FIBRILLATION

The most common cause of a perpetual arrhythmia is auricular fibrillation. When viewed in the laboratory animal, the fibrillating auricles show no co-ordinated systole; twitchings and undulatory movements suggest incessant activity of the entire musculature, produced by the irregular course of the fibrillation wave. In flutter (see Fig. 223) the pathway of the circus movement is the same at each revolution. In fibrillation (see Fig. 229) the course varies, and impulses arrive at the A-V node at irregular intervals. This accounts for the total irregularity of the rhythm in fibrillation.

Auricular fibrillation in young people generally complicates the later course of mitral stenosis. As a rule care should be used in making the diagnosis of fibrillation in patients less than 15 years of age, although at times this arrhythmia may complicate congenital lesions (page 350). In later life auricular fibrillation frequently accompanies arteriosclerotic or hypertensive cardiovascular disease. Rarely is it associated with aortic regurgitation, and for this reason is seldom met in syphilitic heart disease.

Recognition of auricular fibrillation usually presents little difficulty. If the rhythm is irregular and the rate exceeds 120 per minute, this arrhythmia is almost certain to be present. If digitalis has slowed the ventricular rate

to 60 or below, the diagnosis may be more difficult. However, it is well to remember that exercise increases the heart rate and accentuates the irregularity when auricular fibrillation is present.

## ILLUSTRATIVE CASES

### RHEUMATIC HEART DISEASE WITH AURICULAR FIBRILLATION AND CONGESTIVE FAILURE

Case 75. V. P., a white American janitor of 42, had a single attack of rheumatic fever in 1928 at the age of 30. He was well until the summer of 1938 when he noticed increasing dyspnea on stairs. This became worse until three months later edema of the feet appeared at night. When first seen in February, 1939, there was orthopnea and anasarca, and the pulse was totally irregular with a precordial rate of 150. The heart was increased in size in all diameters, and there was a systolic and a diastolic murmur at the cardiac apex. The pulmonic second sound was accentuated.

CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS. A. Etiologic. Rheumatic. Inactive. B. Anatomic. Cardiac hypertrophy. Mitral stenosis. Mitral insufficiency. C. Physiologic. Auricular fibrillation. Congestive cardiac failure. D. Functional Classification Class 4. Therapeutic Classification Class E.

Discussion. In this patient the onset of congestive failure was attended by a change from sinus rhythm to auricular fibrillation. The ventricular rate was rapid and consequently the stage was set for a good therapeutic result. In patients who have cardiac failure and rapid auricular fibrillation, a great deal may be expected from the prompt use of digitalis in full dosage. The bombardment of the responsive ventricle by the impulses from the fibrillating auricle is lessened, many of the inefficient, feeble beats are eliminated, the pulse deficit disappears, diuresis begins, and the signs of cardiac failure recede. Subjective improvement parallels the changes produced by this drug and the patient is "pleased mightily."

Examination of this patient five days after the administration of 1.3 Gm. (20 grains) of digitalis whole leaf showed continued fibrillation but a much slower ventricular rate. No attempt was made to restore normal rhythm because of the extent and type of the lesion. When the ventricular rate reached 70, the digitalis was cut to 0.1 Gm. (1½ grains) of the whole leaf daily. This maintenance dose will be necessary for the rest of the patient's life. One injection of mercupurin, 2.0 cc., was given at the start of the treatment to help the digitalis clear the edema. The same result would have been achieved eventually without the mercupurin in this patient.

### PAROXYSMAL AURICULAR FIBRILLATION—NO OTHER EVIDENCE OF HEART DISEASE

Case 76. Mrs. A. C. W., an American housewife of 61, was first seen in 1929 with the chief complaint of attacks of rapid irregular heart action. These had been experienced on the average of three times a year for the past 14 years.

PHYSICAL EXAMINATION. BP. 128/80. The heart was normal in size and shape (Fig. 144A). There were no murmurs. Other features of the examination were irrelevant except for the presence of a small calcified fibroid tumor. At the time of the next seizure, an electrocardiogram was obtained (Fig. 144B) which showed the presence of auricular

fibrillation. Normal rhythm returned spontaneously one hour later (Fig. 144B). From 1929 until 1940 many attacks similar to this one have been observed. There are no signs of congestive failure during the attacks. The heart has not increased in size, as shown by frequent orthodiagraphic studies. The basal metabolic rate has been taken many times, the figures ranging from minus eight to plus four.

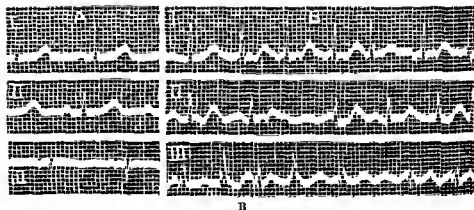


FIG. 144. A Roentgenogram. The heart is not enlarged. B. The electrocardiogram: (a) normal rhythm, (b) taken during a paroxysm. Auricular fibrillation is present.

**Discussion.** The occurrence of paroxysmal auricular fibrillation in patients exhibiting no other signs of cardiac disease is relatively rare. In a study of 200 cases of paroxysmal auricular fibrillation, Parkinson and Campbell<sup>293</sup> found that 9 per cent showed no apparent cause for the occurrence of this marked arrhythmia. White and Jones,<sup>293</sup> in an analysis

of 376 cases of auricular fibrillation, found that 8.0 per cent were free from heart disease.

In the five patients that I have studied, the inciting factors in precipitating the paroxysm of fibrillation were: alcohol in two, a gastro-intestinal upset in two, and unusual exertion in one. In the patient I have selected for discussion here, the attacks have been present for 25 years and always follow a digestive upset.

Since there are no gross or microscopic lesions of the auricular musculature characteristic of fibrillation, we may assume that the presence of the arrhythmia does not depend upon a definite structural defect in the heart. It is primarily a functional alteration and may be produced in many instances by extracardiac neurogenic forces.

Hyperthyroidism is the first thought when no explanation for the paroxysms of fibrillation is evident at the time of the initial study. Many cases will ultimately fall into this group, particularly if the fact is kept in mind that thyrotoxic heart disease may exist in the presence of a normal basal metabolic rate. A complete study should be made of the skin, the eyes, the neck, the weight changes, and the hands for the presence of tremor before deciding against the thyroid as the dominating influence. The physical signs should be weighed with the laboratory evidence.

When paroxysmal auricular fibrillation is present, the heart should be carefully watched between attacks. Evidence of mitral stenosis should be sought in the character of the first heart sound, and the presence of early diastolic murmurs and the size and shape of the heart on fluoroscopic examination. A large auricle in one of the oblique positions on fluoroscopy may point to an overlooked mitral lesion.

All of the patients that I have studied who have suffered from paroxysms of auricular fibrillation with no other evidence of heart disease have had one thing in common. This was a marked *nervous instability*. All were emotional and showed a tendency to over-reaction to the ordinary stimuli of life. In each instance I suspected that the trigger mechanism was the thyroid gland but could not prove this view to be correct. It is certainly true that this type of person presents much more opportunity for the occurrence of abnormal stimuli that are reflected in the cardiac mechanism by the sudden onset of paroxysms of auricular fibrillation. How the irregular circus movement in the auricle is started in these cases remains unknown. It must be closely related to the mechanism operative in disturbances of the thyroid gland. The "trigger" may be the adrenal.

In the patient under discussion the investigation was first directed toward the thyroid status. Since repeated determinations of the basal metabolic rate showed no elevation, and a therapeutic trial of iodides was entirely ineffectual in lessening the frequency of the seizures, studies were carried further, and an allergic cause was sought.

While I have seen allergy assume an important etiologic role in a few cases of paroxysmal auricular tachycardia, I have never met it as the exciting factor in paroxysmal auricular fibrillation. However, this patient

was completely studied by Dr. Kern. The result of his investigation and a discussion of the case from the allergic standpoint will be found on page 459.

Quinidine in 0.3 Gm. (5 grains) doses was found to be invariably successful in restoring normal rhythm in this patient. Consequently, when attacks appeared with increasing frequency, she was placed on maintenance dosage of the drug, as a prophylactic measure. A 0.3 Gm. (5 grains) capsule was given twice daily, and later this was increased to three times daily. While occasional small doses of quinidine were very well tolerated, when maintenance doses were begun, minor symptoms were complained of at the end of the second week. These consisted of headache, vertigo, nausea, and finally tinnitus. When the maintenance dosage was decreased, paroxysms returned, and larger doses were found to be required to restore normal rhythm. The patient finally requested that she be allowed to take the quinidine at the time of the paroxysms and stop the daily ration of the drug. She stated that she would rather run the risk of an attack at an inconvenient time than tolerate the annoying symptoms that accompanied maintenance doses of quinidine.

#### CONGESTIVE CARDIAC FAILURE INDUCED BY A PAROXYSM OF AURICULAR FIBRILLATION IN A SENILE HEART

**Case 77.** W. M., a male clerk of 70, when first seen, was complaining of dysuria, frequency, and nocturia of three days' duration. The temperature was  $101^{\circ}$  F., pulse 90 and regular, and the heart was normal in size and shape. There were no murmurs. The urine showed a light cloud of albumin and was loaded with pus and blood cells. When an unidentified streptococcus was cultured from the urine, a diagnosis of urinary tract infection was made, and the patient was given 2.0 Gm. (30 grains) of sulfanilamide as an initial dose and 1.0 Gm. (15 grains) every four hours. When examined the next day, the pulse was 140 and totally irregular. Orthopnea and cyanosis were present. Râles were heard at the lung bases.

**Discussion.** Paroxysms of auricular fibrillation not uncommonly follow toxic states, for example, those produced by infectious diseases like pneumonia or the ingestion of a drug or poison in large quantities. In this old gentleman, it was difficult to decide whether to associate the onset of auricular fibrillation with the toxemia of the urinary tract infection or the sulfanilamide.

The therapy employed was based on the signs of congestive failure that appeared so quickly: dyspnea, cyanosis, and finally pulmonary edema. The patient had not previously been taking digitalis, consequently an initial dose of strophanthin 0.4 mg. (1/150 grain) was given intravenously, and in addition a hypodermic injection of 15 mg. (3/4 grain) of morphine sulfate. There was marked improvement in the congestive signs in two hours. At this time tablets of digitalis whole leaf were started by mouth. In 24 hours normal rhythm returned.

In Case 76 the paroxysms of auricular fibrillation caused complaints of palpitation and vertigo, but no signs have ever appeared that point to the slightest circulatory insufficiency. Consequently, when we see how well

the heart muscle has withstood these repeated assaults for many years, it is small wonder that we speak well of its functional capacity and doubt the presence of cardiac disease.

In Case 77, however, the situation is different. In this old man the sudden burden of the arrhythmia overtaxed the myocardial capacity and precipitated signs of failure. The intravenous administration of strophanthin was called for in such an emergency, and it was followed by rapid improvement. Digitalization was completed using the whole leaf tablet by mouth, and maintenance dosage was then continued.

## HEART BLOCK

This arrhythmia was recognized and described clinically before the specialized tissue of the conduction system was discovered. The work of many investigators during the last part of the nineteenth century proved that impulses are conducted from the auricle to the ventricle over the A-V or His bundle. If the tissue of the normal bundle is clamped lightly in the experimental animal, the function is interfered with, and the length of time for an impulse to pass from auricle to ventricle is increased. If the clamp is tightened, the time is still further lengthened until an occasional beat is dropped. Further compression will cause higher degrees of block until the process is complete. When this occurs, the auricles continue to beat at their usual rate, while after a pause the ventricles respond to a new (or idioventricular) center just below the level of the lesion and resume their contractions at a much slower rate. During the time of ventricular adjustment, cerebral anemia usually occurs. If the pause is longer, it may be attended by coma and convulsions. A similar sequence of events has been observed clinically when conduction through the bundle of His has been seriously affected by a disease process. The attacks of cerebral anemia may cause vertigo and faintness or may be attended by coma and convulsions. These attacks have been termed Adams-Stokes seizures, although Adams and Stokes were by no means the first to describe them.

Since the electrocardiograph records faithfully the time consumed by the passage of the contraction impulse from auricle to ventricle, slight delays are readily detected by this method (page 615). The presence of even a mild degree of inflammatory change in the neighborhood of the bundle or interference with a portion of the coronary blood supply may be reflected at once in the prolongation of the P-R interval of the electrocardiogram. Many times this is the only sign present to suggest cardiac involvement during the course of acute rheumatism or diphtheria. The prolonged P-R intervals may be missed, since few patients are studied by the electrocardiographic method. However, when the heart block progresses to the stage of dropped beats or to complete dissociation, it will attract clinical attention if the pulse is carefully studied.

The anatomic change present in infectious states may be a temporary one and complete functional recovery of the conduction system may be



possible following resolution of the inflammatory exudate. The electrocardiogram will then return to normal. Temporary change in the conduction time may also be associated with excess vagal stimulation, asphyxia, uremia, or it may follow the toxic action of certain drugs like digitalis or quinidine. Coronary disease, particularly occlusion, may cause a more permanent alteration to occur although even here collateral circulation may make possible the return of normal function in a few days (see Fig. 243). Infiltration of the conduction tissues by a secondary tumor growth may produce heart block of a more permanent nature because of destruction of the tissue (page 407). Heart block rarely results from congenital deformities in the septum (page 343).

The gumma of syphilis as a cause of complete heart block is most infrequent, although this is generally the first one mentioned by the student. Invasion of the bundle from the vegetative growths of subacute bacterial endocarditis is likewise unusual. Graybiel and White,<sup>11</sup> in a recent survey of 72 cases of complete A-V dissociation, found the cause to be coronary disease in 47, congenital heart disease in 4, possible congenital heart disease in 2, rheumatic heart disease in 3, syphilis in 3, diphtheria in 4; while the remaining 9 cases were of mixed or uncertain etiology.

At postmortem, when sections of the heart are made and the conduction system is inspected, the degree of change by no means parallels the clinical symptoms. For example, only a thin strand of tissue may be found remaining, yet during life the conduction system may have shown perfect function. In other cases a great deal of apparently good tissue may be seen in hearts of patients who showed complete block during life. The only explanation in the latter instance seems to be the chemical changes present during life, in and about the bundle tissue, caused by anoxemia and circulatory stasis. In cases where no change at all is seen in the bundle tissue and complete block was known to have been present, we must consider vagal action and the effect of certain drugs.

While the electrocardiogram may show a prolongation of the P-R interval as the only evidence of an acute myocarditis, two physical signs that will aid in establishing the diagnosis may be detected by the careful clinician. If the time interval between the auricular and ventricular systole is lengthened, a splitting of the first heart sound may occur. The first element of this sound is caused by auricular systole. Again, if a mitral stenosis is present, the characteristic rumbling murmur may change its position from presystole to early or mid-diastole for the same reason. Where the degree of block is greater and occasional dropped beats occur, the pauses that accompany them may be detected in the radial pulse, and the differential diagnosis from premature beats may be made by careful auscultation. Close inspection may reveal a wave in the jugular veins produced by the blocked auricular contraction during the period of ventricular asystole.

Auriculoventricular block is a symptom and not a disease. Consequently in most of the following illustrative cases it will be noted that the treat-

ment is that of the underlying condition causing the block. However, when the block is complete and causes a profound disturbance in the cardiac action with Adams-Stokes seizures, it requires special treatment. In White's series of 72 cases, symptoms related to the block itself occurred in 44 and in four instances were the probable cause of death.

## ILLUSTRATIVE CASES

### PROLONGATION OF THE P-R INTERVAL (FIRST STAGE HEART BLOCK) DURING THE COURSE OF ACUTE RHEUMATIC INFECTION

**Case 78.** C. C., a male elevator operator of 23 was admitted to the Woman's College Hospital on May 27, 1936 complaining of backache and pains in the joints. The onset of the present illness was a week prior to admission when a sore throat and evening temperature appeared. Physical examination on admission showed T. 100, B.P. 116/76, pulse 88, rhythm regular, no cardiac enlargement and no murmurs. The joints showed no swelling or redness. An electrocardiogram showed prolongation of the P-R intervals to 0.32 second.

**CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS.** A Etiologic Rheumatic Active B Anatomic No cardiac enlargement. C Physiologic First stage heart block. D Functional Classification Class 1. Therapeutic Classification Class E.

**Discussion.** The prolongation of the P-R interval in this patient was a very valuable finding suggesting at once the nature of the joint manifestations. An involvement of the heart by the rheumatic process was suspected, and a diagnosis of acute myocarditis based on this finding. The treatment of the heart block in this instance is that of the underlying rheumatic process (Chapter 3).

### COMPLETE HEART BLOCK COMPLICATED BY ADAMS-STOKES SEIZURES

**Case 79.** Mr. O. F., an executive of 74, was first seen October 10, 1936 complaining of weakness, dyspnea, and vertigo. Hypertension had been present for some years. Three months previous to the first examination marked edema of the feet appeared but cleared up on bed rest. The dyspnea persisted to the time of the first examination.

**PHYSICAL EXAMINATION.** The blood pressure was found to be 180/110. Pulse 40. The heart was enlarged to the left on percussion, the left border measuring 12.5 cm. from the mid-sternal line, and the right border 3.0 cm. An apical systolic bruit was heard poorly transmitted in the direction of the axilla. The liver edge was palpable beneath the right costal margin. There was no edema.

**LABORATORY DATA.** The first electrocardiogram (see Fig. 213) taken 10/10/36 showed complete dissociation with auricular rate of 100 and ventricular rate of 40. Occasional ventricular complexes showed the presence of faulty intraventricular conduction.

An orthodiagram showed a heart of hypertensive shape with a cardiothoracic ratio of 0.51. It was possible to note the A-V dissociation during fluoroscopic study.

**COURSE.** The patient was examined again four months later (February, 1937) at which time he still complained of weakness and dyspnea. In addition, he stated that he had experienced two spells of sudden syncope, both following emotional upsets. Consciousness was lost on each occasion for less than one minute. There were no convulsive movements and recovery was prompt and complete.

An electrocardiogram taken on the second visit showed striking differences in the T-waves in both direct and indirect leads. There had been no precordial pain or paroxysmal dyspnea, nevertheless these changes were ascribed to a coronary occlusion which had occurred since the last examination. The orthodiagram showed no essential

change. The urine showed a trace of albumin, fixation of the specific gravity (1.008) and both hyaline and light granular casts. The blood Wassermann reaction was negative, and the blood pressure reading was increased, this time measuring 220/110.

The next examination was made 15 months later at the patient's home (May 20, 1938). His interval history indicated a steady downhill course. During the late winter and early spring months his spells of syncope had increased in frequency. They were of longer duration, and convulsive twitchings were reported to have taken place during all the seizures. There was no incontinence of urine or feces. Members of the family who witnessed attacks stated that they were preceded by pallor. However, the onset of each attack was usually announced by the patient himself. Cyanosis followed the pallor, and the respirations became frequent, deep and noisy. In a minute convulsive twitchings of the extremities appeared, followed by return of consciousness. We were able during the next 24 hours to witness many of these seizures. They varied in length from less than a minute to over six minutes. During the early, shorter seizures the patient would recover and resume the conversation. Electrocardiograms were continuously recorded. The next day the attacks were longer in duration, and consciousness returned more slowly. Finally, after an attack lasting six minutes, consciousness was not regained. During a terminal coma, brief seizures continued until death nine and one-half hours later. Postmortem examination was not obtainable.

**CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS.** A. Etiologic: Hypertension, Arteriosclerosis, B. Anatomic: Cardiac enlargement, Coronary occlusion, Relative mitral insufficiency. C. Physiologic: Heart block with Adams-Stokes seizures. D. Functional Classification: Class I, Therapeutic Classification: Class E.

**Discussion.** The Adams-Stokes attacks in this patient from the time of their onset 15 months before death appeared to have a direct relationship to emotional upsets. During the last 48 hours of life these attacks varied in duration from one-half minute to six minutes, becoming more prolonged and more frequent after the first 24 hours until the seizure that lasted over six minutes permanently eliminated consciousness. Until the last 24 hours of life, the patient was able to announce the beginning of every attack, which always coincided with the disappearance of the radial pulse. Pallor followed, and the respirations became deep and noisy. There were no convulsive movements noted at this time, although the muscles about the neck and face seemed to be tighter. The pallor continued, changing in less than a minute to cyanosis. When the pulse beats were felt, the patient's face became purplish-red and convulsive movements occurred. Apnea followed the color change in the face.

The series of events observed in this patient during successive Adams-Stokes attacks is not fortuitous but dependent on a definite relationship between respiration and circulation that Formijne<sup>103</sup> has observed in a series of clinical and experimental studies. With the onset of the attack, all blood flow ceases. Respirations continue, giving the blood stagnant in the lungs a chance to become more completely saturated with oxygen and to lose a great deal more of its carbon dioxide than ordinarily occurs. With recovery, the first substantial cardiac contraction sends out this pooled, hyperventilated blood. Apnea results when it strikes the respiratory center. The patient's color undergoes a marked change with the arrival of blood rich in oxygen in the capillaries of the face. The convulsive movements that follow at this point arise from the alkaline state of the blood,

since the hyperventilation received in the lungs during the cessation of circulations washed out an excess of carbon dioxide.

A study of this patient's electrocardiograms before the seizures suggested a coronary accident as the cause of the complete block. The attacks were preceded by the appearance in the tracing of occasional ventricular extrasystoles which became more frequent and then appeared in short runs of three or more, leading into the attack. A very rapid ventricular rhythm was seen during some of the periods of unconsciousness. During others, standstill of the ventricles was observed.

### TREATMENT

The proper management of these attacks depends upon the electrocardiographic findings. Where ventricular standstill causes the cerebral anemia and syncope, the treatment consists of the intramuscular injection of  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 1 cc. of a solution of epinephrine hydrochloride U.S.P. between attacks to stimulate the idioventricular center. While this drug is useful in preventing seizures, it should be administered with great care. Some observers<sup>114</sup> have successfully combined epinephrine with barium chloride. The latter drug increases the irritability of the area in the ventricle below the level of the block and makes it more susceptible to the action of the epinephrine. In the presence of complete standstill of the ventricles, the epinephrine should be given by intracardiac injection,<sup>303, 334</sup> inasmuch as action of the drug by any other route is unlikely during the period of cardiac standstill. Epinephrine tends to increase both auricular and ventricular rates in these instances.

While a life-saving procedure in the presence of standstill, epinephrine may be actually harmful if the prefibrillary type of ventricular tachycardia or ventricular fibrillation are present (see Fig. 214). These abnormal rhythms are evidence enough of the irritability of the tissues. An accentuation of this state by the introduction of epinephrine is contraindicated, since it has been shown<sup>173, 335</sup> to produce or prolong ventricular fibrillation, which is likely to result in death.

The use of ephedrine in complete heart block was first reported by Miller.<sup>271</sup> His patient had complete A-V dissociation but no Adams-Stokes seizures and showed increase in auricular and ventricular rate and a change in the shape of the P-waves and ventricular complexes following hypodermic injection of 100 mg. ( $1\frac{1}{2}$  grains). Stecher<sup>353</sup> reported favorably on ephedrine when used in a similar case having Adams-Stokes seizures following ventricular standstill. The drug was given by mouth in 30 mg. ( $\frac{1}{2}$  grain) doses three times daily for one week and then 20 mg. ( $\frac{1}{3}$  grain) three times daily for two weeks. During this time there was complete relief from attacks. Cheer, Tung, and Bien<sup>55</sup> found that patients with complete heart block responded to ephedrine quite differently and suggested the administration of atropine to prevent the reflex stimulation of the vagus and the rise in blood pressure following ephedrine. The combination of these two drugs does not abolish the complete block.

Wedd recently reported a case of complete heart block resulting from rheumatic infection in a woman 41 years old. Several Adams-Stokes seizures were observed and epinephrine was without effect. Following the injection of 2 mg. (1/30 grain) of atropine sulfate deep into the deltoid muscle, the heart began to beat normally, no further syncopal attacks occurred and the patient made an uneventful recovery. This observation is of great therapeutic interest and points to the action of the vagus in cases of heart block following rheumatic fever. It agrees with the studies of Gross and Field who found minimal changes in the conduction system in rheumatic fever and concluded that vascular changes were more important than exudative. Vagal release in these cases may increase the coronary flow.

Poole and Wilkinson<sup>303</sup> have recently reported a case of complete heart block in a man of 72 where reversion to a normal rhythm occurred after administration of small doses of benzedrine sulfate (amphetamine sulfate). Twelve hours after administration of the first dose of 10 mg. (1/6 grain) by mouth, the pulse rose to 68 and there was improvement in the clinical status of the patient. When the drug was withheld, the block returned and it was again given with identical results. The dosage of amphetamine was therefore maintained. These authors believe that the drug is superior to epinephrine and ephedrine for this purpose. Amphetamine is closely related chemically to both ephedrine and epinephrine and possesses similar pharmacologic properties; so this action in heart block is not unexpected.

The treatment carried out in the patient under discussion was as follows. When first seen, a capsule containing theophylline ethylene diamine 0.12 Gm. (2 grains) and phenobarbital 15 mg. (1/4 grain) was given after meals. When evidence of congestive failure appeared, he was completely digitalized and then maintained on 0.1 Gm. (1 1/2 grains) of the whole leaf daily. When the Adams-Stokes attacks appeared, the patient was given ephedrine hydrochloride in 20 mg. (1/3 grain) doses every four hours by mouth. Later a hypodermic injection of 30 mg. (1/2 grain) was given every two hours. We were afraid of epinephrine injections because of the nature of the arrhythmia seen in the electrocardiograms during the seizures.

#### HYPERTENSIVE CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE COMPLICATED BY COMPLETE HEART BLOCK AND ADAMS-STOKES SEIZURES

Case 80. Miss A. M., a retired school teacher of 76, was first seen on October 7, 1938 following a "spell" of unconsciousness. The patient had been in fair health until a week before when she suddenly became dizzy and lost consciousness. During the seizure there were convulsive movements. A similar attack occurred the day before admission to the hospital. It was followed by vomiting and some sense of fullness in the chest.

PHYSICAL EXAMINATION. B.P. 168/78. Pulse 40. The heart was enlarged to percussion in all diameters, the left border reaching 13 cm. to the left of the mid-sternal line. The lungs were clear, and the liver border was palpated two fingers' breadth below the costal margin. All reflexes were normal. No edema was noted.

LABORATORY DATA. The blood Wassermann reaction was negative. Blood count: hemoglobin 72 per cent (Sahli); R.B.C. 3,650,000; W.B.C. 8,200; Differential, neutrophils 64 per cent, lymphocytes 36 per cent. The urine showed specific gravity of 1.010, a heavy trace of albumin, no sugar and a few hyaline casts. Blood urea nitrogen

18 mg. The roentgenogram of the chest showed the heart to be of the hypertensive shape with widening in all diameters.

COURSE. On the first day of a two-weeks' stay at the Woman's College Hospital this patient had a typical Adams-Stokes seizure. She gave warning of its approach during the taking of an electrocardiogram, consequently the whole seizure was recorded (see Figs. 215 and 216).

Discussion. Following the Adams-Stokes seizure the patient was placed on barium chloride in 60 mg. (1 grain) doses after meals. There were no other attacks during her stay in the hospital. Six months later a follow-up note from her physician states that the medication had been continued with *no recurrence of the seizures*. I do not believe, however, that her freedom from syncopal attacks came as a direct result of the therapy, since there is always a tendency for these attacks to cease spontaneously. They occur more frequently in some patients than in others, for example, in Case 79 the seizures were so frequent that they were not all recorded. Usually the remedy that is administered at the time of the spontaneous recovery gains an undeserved reputation that it loses in a few years. No specific drug for Adams-Stokes seizures has yet been found, and a multiplicity of remedies makes the therapy of this rare disease appear to the casual observer to be in a confused and unsettled state.

Early experimental work showed that the salts of barium and calcium increased the irritability of cardiac muscle, and in 1923 barium chloride was first used clinically. Good reports appeared on all sides, and its action combined with adrenalin caused favorable comment. Starting with the report of Parsonnet and Hyman,<sup>204</sup> who used the drug unsuccessfully in eight cases of complete heart block with Adams-Stokes seizures, the tide has recently turned against barium chloride.

Lueth<sup>240</sup> has advised the use of metrazol in complete heart block with the Adams-Stokes syndrome. In four of his cases two were greatly benefited, while in the other two it proved to be of little value. However, the drug has no untoward effects even when used over long periods, a fact which recommends it when other measures fail. Metrazol (cardiazol) is pentamethylene tetrazol, a substance with camphor-like action, is soluble in water, withstands heat, and therefore can be safely and easily sterilized for subcutaneous injection. The hypodermic injection varies with the patient. Usually it is wise to start with small doses ( $\frac{1}{2}$  to 1 cc. of a 10 per cent solution) subcutaneously and at the same time to administer the drug by mouth. Larger doses (5 to 7 cc. of a 10 per cent solution) have recently been given intravenously in schizophrenia with few permanent effects on the heart. In the Adams-Stokes cases the beneficial action of the drug comes about through its stimulation of the vasomotor tone and respiration. The same action recommends its use in cases of circulatory collapse.

Thyroid U.S.P. has been recommended for the prevention of Adams-Stokes seizures in doses of  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 3 grains daily to increase the irritability and rate of the ventricles.

It must be emphasized that complete heart block and Adams-Stokes

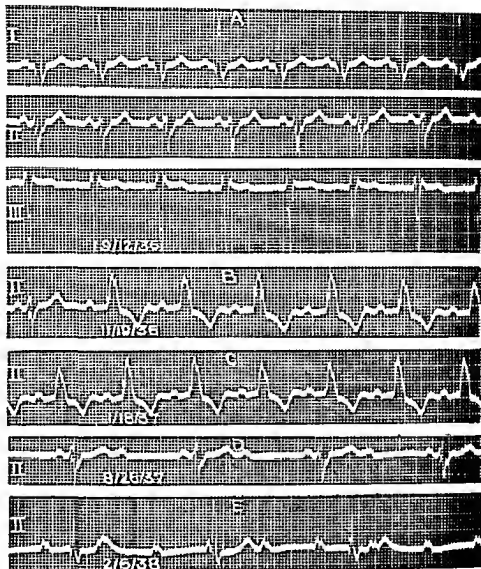


FIG. 145. A series of electrocardiograms of a white male of 66, suffering from hypertensive cardiovascular disease and angina. B.P. 210/100, heart moderately enlarged when first seen. On careful regulation of regime the clinical status showed no change during the next three years. The progress of his lesion is reflected in his electrocardiograms. A. Three standard leads taken at the time of his first examination. Note marked left axis deviation and QRS-2. B. Lead 2 from a tracing made two months later. Note the transition from normal beat to bundle-branch block. There is also a slight prolongation of the P-R intervals. No digitalis had been given. C. Two months later the bundle-branch block persists. D. Seven months later. A 2 : 1 heart block is present. The bundle-branch lesion is no longer in evidence. E. Six months later. The heart block is now complete. Tracings similar to this one were obtained over the course of the next two years. The patient died in February, 1940, six months after the onset of congestive cardiac failure. No Adams-Stokes seizures appeared at any time.

syndrome are not synonymous. Heart block may be present for many years without the occurrence of faintness, syncope, or convulsive seizures. This is well illustrated by the patient whose electrocardiogram appears in Fig. 145.

### COMPLETE HEART BLOCK CAUSED BY TUMOR METASTASIS—AUTOPSY

**Case 81.** C. E. F., a white male laborer of 45, was admitted to the Philadelphia General Hospital complaining of swelling of the legs. The onset was three years before admission when some edema appeared at night, but the patient was able to work until 6/21/37. At this time he developed precordial pain, increase in edema and cough.

**PHYSICAL EXAMINATION** showed B.P. 120/80, an emphysematous chest full of moist crepitant râles. The liver was enlarged 3 cm. below the costal margin. There was no fluid in the abdomen. The fingers showed slight clubbing, and the ankles pitting edema, moderate in degree. The heart was enlarged to the left. The apex beat was in the sixth interspace in the anterior axillary line, and a soft systolic murmur was present over the apex. No thrills. Heart rate 60 to 70 and irregular.

**LABORATORY DATA.** Electrocardiogram showed right axis deviation and complete heart block. The ventricular rate was more rapid than one would expect in heart block (60 to 90).

The roentgenogram showed cardiac enlargement and emphysematous lungs with diaphragmatic adhesions.

**CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS.** A. Etiologic Arteriosclerosis. B. Anatomic Cardiac enlargement. C. Physiologic: Heart block. Congestive failure. D. Functional Classification Class 3, Therapeutic Classification Class E.

**COURSE.** In spite of venesection, digitalization and other measures directed toward the relief of the symptoms of cardiac failure, the patient's course was rapidly downhill, and he died two weeks after admission.

**AUTOPSY** revealed about 200 cc. of blood-tinged fluid in the pericardial cavity. The parietal pericardium showed no change, but the visceral layer was covered with tumor nodules extending into the myocardium (Fig. 146A). The left auricle and the right ventricle were filled with a mass of tumor tissue (Fig. 146B), grayish-red in color. They were fairly firm, not friable and were attached by pedicles to the region of the septum, in places extending part way through the latter. There was extensive tumor infiltration of the endocardium above the mitral ring, but the valves were not involved in the neoplastic process. The inferior vena cava was partially obstructed by large masses of tumor tissue in the right auricle. The coronary arteries were unchanged.

**Discussion.** Metastatic tumor of the heart invading the septum and causing heart block is rare. It must always be thought of, however, in patients with a primary tumor growth in any region of the body and circulatory symptoms of obscure etiology (Chapter 14). In this case the primary focus was thought to be a large ulcer in the stomach. It was impossible to determine the exact type of tumor cell present; either epithelial or lymphoid origin was suspected.

### PULSUS ALTERNANS

#### HYPERTENSIVE CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE WITH BEGINNING CONGESTIVE CARDIAC FAILURE—PULSUS ALTERNANS

**Case 82.** F. H., an Italian laborer of 64, was admitted to the Woman's College Hospital on 7/4/33 complaining of increasing dyspnea and edema. He was examined in the cardiac clinic eight months prior to admission, at which time the blood pressure was found to be 220/120.





FIG. 146. A. Tumor nodules in epicardium. B. Tumor mass filling cavity of the right ventricle. (Autopsy No. 13,696, Philadelphia General Hospital.)

**PHYSICAL EXAMINATION.** The left cardiac border extended to the midaxillary line. A systolic murmur was heard over the apex, and there was dullness to the right scapular angle with the absence of tactile fremitus and breath sounds. On admission the pulse rate was 120 with regular rhythm. Half the pulse beats were found to come through at a blood pressure level of 200; at 190 the pulse rate suddenly doubled. The diastolic level was 120. The weakness of the alternate beats was not appreciated on pulse palpation. An electrocardiogram showed a left axis deviation and an inversion of T-1.

**CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS.** A. Etiologic Hypertension. B. Anatomic Cardiac enlargement. Relative mitral regurgitation. C. Physiologic Normal sinus rhythm. Pulsus alternans. D. Functional Classification. Class 4 Therapeutic Classification Class E.

**Discussion.** The detection of pulsus alternans in this patient confirmed the diagnosis of left ventricular failure and suggested a poor prognosis. The treatment consisted of bed rest, thoracentesis, venesection, and digitalization. On this regime the patient improved and was edema-free by the end of the first week in the hospital. Two weeks after admission, however, he died suddenly during another seizure of paroxysmal nocturnal dyspnea or sudden left ventricular failure. Characteristic alteration of the pulse appeared at intervals during the last two weeks of life.

Pulsus alternans can be demonstrated best by a graphic tracing of the radial pulse. However, whenever its presence is suspected, an attempt should be made to demonstrate it by the use of the sphygmomanometer. To do this, the cuff is inflated above the systolic level of the blood pressure. As the mercury column drops slowly, only one-half of the pulse beats will be heard coming through. As the mercury falls still further (range about 5 to 15 mm.), a level will be reached where the pulse rate is suddenly doubled. In other words, all the pulse beats will be heard at this second systolic level.

Alternation has been attributed to the fact that the myocardium as a whole may fail to respond to each contraction impulse because of the presence of advanced myocardial disease. The refractory fibers are scattered through the whole heart and are sufficiently numerous in certain disease states for their absence to be detected when the strength of the pulse beat is recorded graphically. The difference at times may be appreciated by careful palpation of the radial pulse. Pulsus alternans may accompany hypertensive cardiovascular disease when there is beginning heart failure or it may appear following an acute coronary occlusion. Where very rapid cardiac rates accompany this phenomenon, the prognostic significance is not the same; for a healthy heart in paroxysmal tachycardia or flutter may be so overloaded that rest of some of the fibers may be a protection mechanism necessary for survival. The prolongation of the refractory periods of some fibers causes alternation when seizures are prolonged. However, in these instances pulsus alternans disappears as soon as the paroxysm is over. ALTERNATION IN THE HEIGHT OF THE QRS COMPLEXES OF THE ELECTROCARDIOGRAM IS NOT IDENTICAL WITH PULSUS ALTERNANS. When mechanical alternation is not present in the pulse tracing or demonstrable in the mercury column of the sphygmomanometer, the electrocardiographic alternation is of no clinical significance.

## FUNCTIONAL HEART DISEASE

C'est l'imagination qui gouverne le genre humain. NAPOLEON BONAPARTE (*Bourrienne, Life*, II, 2).

Many patients have "heart disease" that is wholly in their imagination. Considering the percentage of the modern population who possess the constitutional background for the development of a neurosis of some type, it is small wonder that present-day radio and newspaper agitation concerning the increase of heart disease turns attention in this direction. Not infrequently the presence of a harmless systolic murmur, discovered quite by accident, or the misinterpretation of an electrocardiogram or roentgenogram by a physician, is the starting point of years of invalidism. Many times the sudden death of a near relative from cardiac disease focuses the attention of the patient on the heart. Likewise, a person of the neurotic type who learns of the presence of organic heart disease may at once develop symptoms out of proportion to the lesion. The symptoms of a cardiac neurosis will then be superimposed on those of a definite circulatory disease.

On the other hand, symptoms of heart disease often are present in patients who are not victims of fear or of psychoneurotic states. They are frequently produced in individuals who are subjected to excessive exertion and loss of sleep over long periods of time. Among the Union forces during the Civil War this syndrome was first recognized and described by Da Costa as "the irritable heart of soldiers." During the World War (1914-1918), Sir Thomas Lewis gave the name "effort syndrome" to the condition, and recently American writers have suggested the more appropriate designation "neurocirculatory asthenia." The last term is to be preferred, since it does not contain any reference to the heart.

## NEUROCIRCULATORY ASTHENIA

Neurocirculatory asthenia is a readily recognized syndrome, characterized by palpitation, dyspnea, easily produced exhaustion, and at times by chest pain following slight exertion. While common in soldiers, it is not infrequently met in civilian practice. It is most essential to distinguish this condition, whenever possible, from the psychoneuroses presenting cardiovascular symptoms. Some cases, however, may be encountered that show a combination of the effort syndrome and the cardiac symptoms of a psychoneurotic nature.

When a nation mobilizes, men from all walks of life and from all but

the vital occupations are gathered together and subjected to the stress and strain of army life. Forced marches, drilling, varying degrees of mental trauma and loss of sleep are daily experiences. If these are long continued, circulatory symptoms develop, sooner in some than in others. Normally, following exertion, any untrained person shows breathlessness, rapid heart action, palpitation, vertigo, and faintness; even precordial pain may accompany extreme effort. Exhaustion and tremor often appear when activity ceases; and if the oxygen debt is great, breathlessness continues. These same sensations occur in men subjected to army routine and cannot at the start be considered abnormal. However, as time goes on, these symptoms are produced by less than ordinary amounts of exertion. Consequently, while the symptoms are not abnormal, they are so easily produced we say the patient suffers from "effort syndrome" or "neurocirculatory asthenia."

Lewis found that the group invalided home from the British expeditionary forces in 1915 because of this disability, was a mixed one.<sup>229</sup> In it were included soldiers who showed no signs of actual heart disease but evidences of constitutional inferiority. Many were of the hyposthenic type with long, flat chests and family histories of psychoneurosis, epilepsy, or insanity. Others were from divisions at the front line where activity had been great and the sojourn long. Consequently exhaustion, loss of sleep, and continued strain were the precipitating factors. In another group, the symptoms of neurocirculatory asthenia came on during convalescence from illnesses like tonsillitis, influenza, or pneumonia. Others showed previously unrecognized incipient tuberculosis, or other infections, while a few showed beginning heart involvement. All had the same symptoms but a wide range of etiologic factors. Consequently the condition became very difficult to analyze in a truly scientific manner. In the army treatment had to be prescribed for these patients as a class, while in civil life individual, and accordingly more successful, management is possible.

#### SYMPTOMS AND SIGNS

The breathlessness or dyspnea of neurocirculatory asthenia is not present when the patient rests, but appears very quickly when slight exertion is attempted. It is probably of nervous origin, since the vital capacity of this group is only a little below normal. Excessive fatigue and exhaustion generally come on very quickly after slight exertion and are accompanied by tremor in many cases. These symptoms closely resemble those produced by hypoglycemia following violent exercise. Likewise, pain over the region of the heart and even hyperesthesia of the adjacent skin surfaces occur on slight exertion. The chest pain is an important symptom and must be differentiated from the pain of angina.

**Palpitation, Dyspnea, and Fainting.** Palpitation commonly attends slight exertion in effort syndrome and is generally caused by sinus tachycardia. Arrhythmias are rare, but extrasystoles occasionally are present. Fainting occurs in this group of cases, generally following slight trauma like the taking of blood from an arm vein. It is usually vasovagal in origin.

Examination of the heart shows little evidence of disease. The only abnormalities will be the tachycardia and the increased forcefulness of the heart beat. The cardiac rate is not uncommonly 85 per minute at rest, while higher rates are observed in patients who are ambulatory. After exercise, the pulse rates mount quickly in these cases and return very slowly to normal. The blood pressure varies. It is low in many patients at rest, but tends to show an exaggerated response to exercise.

### INCIDENCE

Neurocirculatory asthenia is not uncommon in civilian practice. The stress and strain of life, overwork, exhaustion, and worry bring on the syndrome in many who have normal hearts. Women have been found to predominate in the cases studied by Edwards and White.<sup>59</sup> In a series of 5000 consecutive private cases these observers report a definite diagnosis of neurocirculatory asthenia in 13.7 per cent. The majority of their patients (85.8 per cent) were under 50 years of age.

Twenty-five years ago, at the outbreak of the first World War, the symptoms observed in the effort-syndrome group were thought to represent the early warnings of various disease states. However, the years have passed, and hypertension and hyperthyroidism have not appeared in excess of the expected ratio in the groups that have been followed. With the world again at war, the number of cases will increase because the provocative factors of fear, hunger, and exhaustion are certain to reappear. Recurrence of the symptoms in the same persons is not unlikely since the basic constitutional factors producing them still exist.

Neurocirculatory asthenia occurs more often in individuals with perfectly normal hearts (65.2 per cent of White's series), but there is nothing to prevent its occurrence in those with heart disease (19.6 per cent of White's series) who possess unstable neurotic personalities. In the latter group the signs of an organic cardiac lesion will be recognized, but the examiner will be struck at once by the exaggerated character of the symptoms when viewed in the light of the amount of demonstrable cardiac damage. Rheumatic heart disease is the type most likely to be complicated by neurocirculatory asthenia.

### MANAGEMENT

The management of the patient with true neurocirculatory asthenia is by no means easy. However, the earlier the condition is detected in army practice and proper treatment begun, the quicker will the soldier be able to return to full duty. Removal from the front line is usually in itself sufficient to produce some degree of improvement, particularly if rest is the first measure employed. Tension is relieved, better hygienic surroundings prevail, and these factors at once favor convalescence.

The first essential in treatment is to give the patient an honest statement of the exact status of his case. This takes time. He must be shown

the result of the thorough physical examination, including electrocardiogram and orthodiagram, and its significance explained. He must be told that there is no evidence of heart disease, but that the annoying and incapacitating symptoms have appeared because he has shown a lack of training. Health, he must be made to realize, will be regained by a process of training, and exercise is in order, not bed rest. The type and duration should fit each case (Chapter 20). Individual care, while not possible in the army where the exercises are carried out in groups, is possible in civilian practice and leads to a quicker result than mass handling.

**Regime.** The patient's day should be planned with care and the program written out during the consultation. No deviations should be allowed. The number of hours of rest at night should be specified; coffee, tea, tobacco, and alcohol forbidden and the strenuous features of the daily work at first prohibited. The patient must realize the importance of starting treatment on a much curtailed schedule even though this attracts the attention of coworkers to him. At all costs he must be launched on an exercise allowance that he is capable of maintaining, and this can be gradually increased according to the response shown at subsequent visits. Exercise is always prescribed in a precise manner, and amounts raised as tolerance is acquired.

The general physical examination may reveal some foci of infection in teeth, tonsils, sinuses, or prostate. These should be evaluated (page 440), and any other abnormality present should receive appropriate attention. Tuberculous infection calls for special management.

**Use of Drugs.** As far as compatible with good practice, drugs should be avoided, but if needed in the treatment of neurocirculatory asthenia, they should be directed toward the minor complicating symptoms like headache, constipation, etc. As far as the condition of neurocirculatory asthenia itself is concerned, drugs are of little value. The patient should be made to realize the cause of his condition, then the fewer drugs used in the treatment, the better. Digitalis accentuates the symptoms, particularly the palpitation, and should not be used. If secondary anemia is found, iron and the usual dietary measures may be prescribed at the start of treatment.

Re-examination of the patient at intervals is justified to make sure that the diagnosis originally advanced remains correct. *Heart size following* additions to the exercise prescription should be determined orthodiagraphically, and the retrocardiac space viewed on each occasion to rule out the presence of mitral stenosis which is often suspected because of the accentuated character of the first heart sound. On the occasion of one of the follow-up visits, a basal metabolism determination should be made to eliminate hyperthyroidism as a contributing factor. Routine observations of the blood pressure, temperature, weight, and cardiac rate are likewise valuable in directing treatment.

Throughout the entire course of therapy, the greatest care should be taken to avoid either saying or hinting that any of the symptoms that the

to expend to open a studio and to renew contacts with many friends in the hope of acquiring pupils, was far above her accustomed level. Consequently an untrained circulatory system was giving her notice of neglect of exercise that had attended long years at the piano.

The result of the examination of the heart was explained in detail, and the normal roentgenogram and electrocardiogram were offered as additional evidence. She was advised to begin her work on a smaller scale in a studio on the street level. Out-of-door exercise in the form of graded walks was prescribed. She was encouraged to seek relief from worry in a different home environment where she would not be alone in the evening.

No cardiac medication was prescribed. A sodium-bromide mixture was given for the first two weeks. By the end of this time, definite improvement was reported. The patient was seen at long intervals after this, and she stated that all cardiac symptoms were less evident and had ceased to annoy her at all when she was working in the company of friends or attending concerts. Considering this patient's build and disposition, the background for the reappearance of the symptoms of effort syndrome is ever present, so we cannot say she is cured. Insomnia, overwork, or worry might cause their return at any time.

**NEUROCIRCULATORY ASTHENIA—INCREASE IN SYMPTOMS UNDER MEDICAL MANAGEMENT—RELIEF FOLLOWING ADRENAL DENERVATION**  
(PRESENTED BY DR. JAMES LEHMAN)

**Case 84.** Mr. J. M., age 23, was admitted to the Woman's College Hospital complaining of "rapid heart beat" for the past eight months. At times the rate was so rapid that it was impossible to count. Precordial pain on slight exertion was added to the picture a month later, and he was forced to give up his work as a grocery clerk. Upon advice of a physician he went to bed for three weeks and took digitalis. He was unimproved. After this he was given iodine for a period of two months. He gained some weight (six pounds) during this time but felt much worse. He was weak, became exhausted on slight exertion, and the chest pain and rapidity of cardiac action were still present.

**EXAMINATION** revealed a well-nourished and well-developed adult male, who was intelligent and highly co-operative. The pupils were equal, moderately dilated, and reacted to light and in accommodation. There was no exophthalmos. The thyroid was slightly enlarged. The lungs were normal. The heart was not enlarged, and there were no murmurs. The rhythm was regular, and the rate varied from 70 to 122 per minute. B.P. was 136/86.

**LABORATORY DATA.** Several urinalyses were normal. Hemoglobin was 90 per cent (Sahli). R.B.C. 4,870,000; W.B.C. 6,300, polymorphonuclears 60 per cent; lymphocytes 37 per cent, monocytes 2 per cent; eosinophiles 1 per cent. Blood urea was 16, glucose 100, basal metabolic rate was plus four.

**CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS.** A. Etiologic Effort syndrome (neurocirculatory asthenia). B. Anatomic: No structural disease. C. Physiologic: Normal sinus rhythm. D. Functional Classification: Class I.

**Discussion.** This young man showed a clinical picture that is typical of neurocirculatory asthenia. He was tall and slender, and there was marked lordosis. The response to slight exertion when he was first seen was exaggerated and consisted of tachycardia, breathlessness, and chest

pain. Great variability of the heart rate was present at all times; a mere change in body position was often sufficient to cause an elevation of the pulse rate of 50 beats a minute. Associated with this were tremor, shakiness, dizziness, sweating, and excessive fatigue. We note that a determination of the blood sugar was normal. The fatigue on exertion was following by such a marked feeling of exhaustion that he was compelled to give up his job and go to bed, at which time all symptoms became much worse. Digitalis was certainly not indicated and it is not surprising that no improvement followed its administration.

It is interesting to note that iodine was then given a therapeutic trial, no doubt with the thought in mind that the condition might, in spite of the normal basal metabolic rate, be due to overactivity of the thyroid gland. There was a slight gain in weight, but the symptoms remained the same.

Many times neurocirculatory asthenia may appear to simulate thyrotoxicosis, but closer inspection of the patient often reveals wide differences. It is very noticeable at the start that the patient with hyperthyroidism is optimistic and complains very little, while the patient with neurocirculatory asthenia is discouraged and constantly complains of many vague symptoms. The patient with thyroid overactivity is bold, ambitious, alert, and moves quickly, while the patient with neurocirculatory asthenia is constantly exhausted and moves slowly. The appetite is normal or increased in thyroid disease, while in effort syndrome, it is poor. The skin in hyperthyroidism is warm, moist, and pink and of unusually fine texture, while in neurocirculatory asthenia cold moist (often cyanotic) extremities are seen. Even the tachycardia differs in the two conditions: When caused by thyroid overaction, it is persistent and sustained, while in neurocirculatory asthenia it is variable.

After many years of research Crile<sup>16, 78</sup> has concluded that neurocirculatory asthenia is a pathologic state in which there is an excessive stimulation of the adrenal sympathetic system. He has attempted to reduce this adrenal overactivity by denervation of these glands.

In our experience, adrenal denervation combined with denervation of the aortic plexus or resection of the splanchnic nerves, has given gratifying results in a small, carefully selected series of cases. The operation is attended by little risk and to date there has been no mortality.

This patient showed no result following prolonged medical treatment; consequently on 3/31/36 a left adrenal denervation and splanchnic resection were performed. The right side was done 4/11/36. The convalescence was smooth except for some abdominal distention. The patient was discharged 14 days after the second operation.

There was immediate improvement in the heart action; this was followed by a gain in weight and strength. Later the patient returned to school, at the same time working extra hours in the grocery store.

On 12/29/36 a gain of 15 pounds was reported. The pulse was 76, B P. 130/90. At the time of this visit he was attending school and working during week-ends. There was no recurrence of rapid heart action.



1/28/37. The patient reported a gain of three additional pounds. The pulse was 80, B.P. 130/80. No symptoms.

On 5/13/39 the patient stated that he was working every day in an office. There were no symptoms. Activities had been gradually increased; in fact, he was able to play tennis occasionally.

## PSYCHONEUROSIS

*The beginning of health is to know the disease. CERVANTES, Don Quixote, Pt. 11, Ch. 60.*

Symptoms referable to the cardiac mechanism may develop in psychoneuroses of any type. Those most frequently involved are the fatigue neuroses (neurasthenia) and the introspective neuroses (hypochondria). Anxiety states have cardiovascular symptoms which are apt to be built around chest pain or cardiac palpitation. Substitution neuroses (hysteria) or obsession states (psychasthenia) less often present cardiac problems.

## ETIOLOGY

Psychoneurotic states occur in patients with established heart disease as well as in normal individuals. The remark of a medical examiner concerning the presence of a heart "murmur" may first direct attention to the heart. The adventitious sound in question may be, and indeed often is, entirely functional, yet fixation is established and the patient is started on the road to invalidism. The road back, if there is one, is long and difficult. It is just as grave an error to diagnose heart disease on the basis of a functional murmur as it is to miss the diagnosis of an early organic lesion. Hasty decisions rendered in dispensary or office in regard to cardiac disease are unfortunately at the bottom of many of the cardiac psychoneuroses. Although the patient's story may sound typical of neurosis, a careful and complete cardiac study should be made before an opinion is rendered. Snap judgment is always dangerous.

The present-day tendency on the part of newspapers to acquaint the public with many facts concerning heart disease, commendable as it may be, is not without serious drawbacks. Too much attention often is paid to symptoms of little importance by a large group of potential psychoneurotics who are unable to sort the wheat from the chaff. The "health talk" many times serves to establish firmly the idea of heart trouble because the description always seems to fit. The sudden death of a near relative from heart disease may kindle fear and start the neurotic on the rounds of physicians' offices. Pain caused by any thoracic or abdominal disorder and referred to the upper abdomen or chest may be the innocent cause of much needless alarm. Given the proper soil, a host of incidents is capable of establishing fixation on the cardiac apparatus. Often symptoms having their origin outside the heart may be responsible. Since the heart, of all organs in the body, commands the most attention, a fear of sudden death

arises when pain in the chest or any abnormality of cardiac rate or rhythm, probably in themselves innocuous, force their way into conscious perception. The fear of heart disease becomes deep-rooted and is difficult to dislodge.

### DIAGNOSIS

It is always well to allow the patient with a functional heart ailment to tell his own story in his own way without interruption. This privilege will contribute greatly to the diagnosis, since the psychoneurotic individual usually will describe a multiplicity of symptoms. If there is fixation on chest pain, the story the patient presents may often be the perfect description of angina, acquired as a result of much travel in medical circles. However, when questioned, there will generally be some small detail of the account that will not fit the picture: the relationship of the pain to exertion, its radiation, or the presence of precordial tenderness.

Palpitation is a common cardiac complaint among psychoneurotics, sometimes dating back to a "scare" in childhood. The fear produced by the original accident is at once recalled whenever palpitation occurs. Soon the patient becomes acutely conscious of the heart action and is quite convinced that serious organic heart disease is present. Advice delivered over the radio at this point is no help. The occurrence of premature beats or extrasystoles, while harmless, increases the introspection, and the psychoneurosis becomes more deeply rooted. These patients may describe every "skip" of the heart for a 24-hour period (Case 69), a symptom in itself quite suggestive of psychoneurosis.

**Other Symptoms.** While precordial pain, tachycardia, and palpitation are most commonly complained of, any of the symptoms of cardiac disease may be presented as the chief complaint by a psychoneurotic individual. Dyspnea, even the nocturnal variety, may be described in addition to fainting, vertigo, coldness of hands and feet and a sense of suffocation. A thorough, deliberate, physical examination at the start impresses the patient and will satisfy the examiner that organic heart disease is absent. It is important to avoid haste in this initial study in order that the slightest detail will not be omitted, for the average psychoneurotic patient is well informed concerning the procedures to be expected as part of a modern cardiovascular examination. During the course of auscultation the physician is closely watched; consequently it is wise not to pause too long in any area. If a systolic apical murmur is present in a rapid overactive heart, which often accompanies the psychoneurotic state, it is wise not to pay too much attention to it. If the patient has previously been informed of its presence, he will usually tell the physician when this stage of the examination is reached. It is best to defer answering questions concerning any of the signs elicited until the entire study has been finished. The importance of the systolic murmur can then be stated in the summary.

Successful treatment of cardiac symptoms that are a part of a psychoneurosis is difficult, and many times it will require the skilled services of a

psychiatrist. If the physician undertakes to treat one of these patients, he must realize at the start that it is a time-consuming procedure and if he does not have sufficient time and interest, he should refer the patient to another physician.

At the initial interview, the patient should be encouraged to tell his own story. Much can be accomplished in an atmosphere where hurry is not evident, if a sympathetic and encouraging attitude is adopted by the physician. Otherwise he is not likely to hear the whole story, and pertinent details may be withheld. Let the patient have his say. Make no attempt to have the story related so as to follow a convenient form. Such a history may be useful for filing, but in the end it generally contains a conglomeration of facts that lead nowhere. In addition, many patients will hesitate to relate the whole story of an illness when they notice that everything is being taken down by the physician.

When the history and physical examination are finished, the physician should tell the patient that he has cardiac symptoms, but that the cause is evident and complete cure is possible. It is obvious that a definite statement like this cannot be effective unless the full confidence of the patient has been gained by a careful and painstaking examination.

Usually a search through the data will reveal the cause of the "heart attacks" in some emotional incident. Emphasizing this association and giving the patient the necessary encouragement successfully launches the "cure." Similar incidents may then less readily provoke symptoms. Improvement may be expected to follow in a few weeks. In all doubtful cases and in those where response is not evident in a reasonable time, the opinion of a psychiatrist should be obtained.

## ILLUSTRATIVE CASES

### CARDIAC PSYCHONEUROSIS COMPLICATING RHEUMATIC HEART DISEASE

Case 85. Miss A. M., a single American clerk of 25, was first seen in June, 1936. There was no previous rheumatic history or illness of any nature. On insurance examination the month before, a heart murmur was discovered and the patient was informed that she had "heart trouble." Since then she developed dyspnea, palpitation, weakness, vertigo, insomnia, and a "catch" in her breathing (sighing respiration<sup>1</sup>). She began to miss many days at work and when examined was contemplating resigning her position. She expressed the fear of sudden death.

PHYSICAL EXAMINATION showed a blood pressure of 120/80, very slight cardiac enlargement, a presystolic murmur and accentuated first sound over the region of the apex. The electrocardiogram showed right axis deviation and notched P-waves in leads 2 and 3. An orthodiagram showed mitralization and slight congestion in the hilar regions on both sides. There were present superficial and deep tenderness in the left precordial area.

CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS. A. Etiologic: Rheumatic. Psychoneurosis. B. Anatomic: Cardiac enlargement. Mitral stenosis. Mitral insufficiency. C. Physiologic: Normal sinus rhythm. D. Functional Classification: Class 1.

Discussion. There is no doubt that this girl had a well-established mitral stenosis unrecognized until the time of the insurance examination.

When this fact was communicated to her, she at once associated it with sudden death. She was a hypersensitive, nervous individual, already possessing the mechanism necessary for the development of a psychoneurosis. The statement of the insurance examiner was the precipitating factor. Some physicians are of the opinion that the diagnosis of psychoneurosis should be advanced only when the physical examination and laboratory studies are entirely negative. However, this is far from the case in many instances, as this patient shows.

The physician who examined this girl mentioned the heart murmur and advised her to consult her own physician. To be sure his advice would be followed, he laid too much emphasis on the gravity of the situation as a whole.

At the start of the treatment of an uncomplicated psychoneurosis an explanation of the symptoms experienced by the patient is easy, but the task becomes more difficult when there is a background of organic heart disease. It should, however, be attempted. The care necessary for the existing lesion should also be stated, and the good reserve strength of the heart muscle demonstrated. Most of these patients, when first seen, have been given digitalis, some in large doses. The withdrawal of this drug may be stressed to drive home the statement that the heart muscle, although damaged, has sufficient reserve which can be retained for many years.

Schnur<sup>331</sup> has recently suggested as a therapeutic test for differentiating the symptoms of cardiac psychoneurosis from those of organic heart disease, the injection of novocaine intradermally at the affected site. The hyperalgesia, tenderness, and pain disappear at once. Often the symptoms of the psychoneurotic state will be relieved by this procedure. Pain due to organic heart disease will not be relieved by this method.

Harmless arrhythmias many times may precipitate a cardiac neurosis. In instances where the arrhythmia appears following trauma, it may continue to produce symptoms in spite of all therapeutic effort until a legal settlement has been made. The patient whose history appears in Case 69 showed improvement following small doses of quinidine sulfate, a sedative mixture, and increase in the prescription of out-of-door exercise.

In some patients over 40 years of age, the precordial pain that attends frequently recurring premature beats may be misinterpreted as the anginal type. The patient may hear of this, in which event it serves to augment the symptoms of the psychoneurosis.

These patients should be completely examined at the start and all tests made. A large dose of reassurance should then be administered, and at subsequent visits the patient should be advised and educated. Repetition of an entire physical examination, or special examinations in these cases at too frequent intervals, serves to make the patient suspect he was not told the truth at first. *Opinions rendered must be positive to be of value.* Advice at the end of the interview "to take things easy" wastes the time spent before this remark, for the patient usually cannot link this advice with the previous statement that he has a perfectly normal heart.

## CARDIAC PSYCHONEUROSIS DURING THE COURSE OF CORONARY DISEASE

Case 86. G. C., a Hebrew tailor of 54, was first seen in January, 1934. Three months before he had an attack of severe chest pain which was proved on electrocardiographic study to be caused by a posterior coronary occlusion. He remained in good condition clinically, and the laboratory studies pointed to progress in the healing of the area of infarction. However, his complaints were multiple pain in the left shoulder, recurring transient pains over the precordium, insomnia, vertigo, epigastric and substernal "burning," and fear of sudden death.

PHYSICAL EXAMINATION showed BP. 120/80, no cardiac enlargement, a soft systolic apical murmur. There were areas of superficial and deep tenderness over the precordium.

CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS. A. Etiologic: Arteriosclerosis. Psychoneurosis. B Anatomic: No cardiac enlargement. Coronary sclerosis. Cardiac infarction. C. Physiologic: Anginal syndrome. D. Functional Classification Class 3. Therapeutic Classification C.

Discussion. The coronary occlusion affected an area of cardiac muscle in this patient, producing an infarction which healed satisfactorily. This event had a marked effect on the nervous system, precipitating a typical psychoneurosis which was the cause of the prolongation of the symptoms. In the presence of a serious organic lesion of this nature, many physicians are hesitant in considering any of the symptoms that may be subsequently presented as functional, when the initial findings point conclusively to a serious heart disorder. However, all the pains in the chest complained of by this patient could not have been due to small occlusions. At least frequent electrocardiograms did not show them. Neither could we assume that these atypical pains were anginal. They did not respond to nitroglycerine on all occasions, and associated with them we had to consider the man's personality, race, and the presence of areas of hyperalgesia and deep tenderness over the precordium.

The first problem here was to discuss the situation frankly with the patient and his family and write down a graded system of increased activities with the aim of dislodging the patient from bed where he had been invalided for too long a period. His pains were not made worse by the end of the first week on the new program. Consequently his allowance was increased during the second week. At the end of this period, his condition continued to improve so he was allowed to return to his shop in a supervisory capacity beside the cash register. After this his complaints were few. His medication consisted of a capsule containing 15 mg. ( $\frac{1}{4}$  grain) of phenobarbital and 0.2 Gm. (3 grains) of theophylline ethylene diamine after meals.

## CARDIAC PSYCHONEUROSIS AND CONGENITAL HEART DISEASE

Case 87. Mrs. C. A., a housewife of 30, was first seen in December, 1933, when she complained of precordial distress, weakness, vertigo, and insomnia. She was emotionally unstable, wept easily, and profusely at the slightest provocation. The family history was suggestive. The only child, a daughter of ten, was an imbecile. The patient stated that she had always been weak, because of heart disease at birth. She was not a "blue baby," but the family physician told her mother that she had a "leaking heart."

PHYSICAL EXAMINATION showed slight cardiac enlargement, a systolic thrill in the third left interspace, accompanied by a high-pitched systolic murmur. The fingers were

not clubbed, and no other defects were noted on physical examination. The electrocardiogram showed high voltage of the QRS groups.

**Discussion.** Cardiac psychoneurosis when associated with organic heart disease will usually be found complicating coronary, rheumatic, or hypertensive types, since these are the most prevalent. It is rarely seen combined with congenital heart disease because of the infrequency of congenital defects in the cases seen in practice.

This patient was a typical psychoneurotic individual. The idea of heart disease became firmly fixed in her mind at an early age. In consequence she always led a sheltered, secluded life, at school and at home. Her mother presented a similar problem in neurosis and was treated for the combination which causes most practitioners to seek shelter: essential hypertension, chronic arthritis, and mucous colitis. The patient took little or no exercise. She was carried up the stairs as a child and always lived in a first floor apartment during married life. Obesity developed in later years, and this accentuated the dyspnea that appeared on slight exertion. The psychoneurosis was so deep-seated that the usual measures over a considerable period were ineffectual in bringing any measure of relief. The signs of her lesion were so typical, and the family history, appearance, and actions, so characteristic of the superimposed psychoneurotic state, that this patient was used for clinic demonstration on frequent occasions. The last time she was shown, the complaints of weakness, malaise, and slight fever failed to attract the attention of the clinician. When the patient failed to reappear for the next examination, our social worker traced her to the ward of another hospital. The diagnosis of subacute bacterial endocarditis had been established by positive blood culture.\*

The lesson to be learned here is never to neglect to follow up the new symptoms that appear even though the diagnosis of psychoneurosis has been previously established. It is also important not to overlook the possibility of the more common complications that attend the cardiac lesion.

\* Autopsy findings Large (uncomplicated) interventricular septal defect containing the vegetations typical of subacute bacterial endocarditis. (Courtesy of Dr. George C. Griffith)

## MISCELLANEOUS TYPES

Up to this point we have considered the main features and the management of various etiologic types of heart disease (page 60). The majority of the remaining conditions will be rarely encountered by the practitioner, and our present knowledge of the other types is still far from complete. Consequently brief descriptions of this miscellaneous group that includes the influence of anemia, neoplasms, pulmonary disease, hypotension, other infections, and toxic agents on the heart, although entirely unrelated, will be grouped for convenience in this chapter. Since most of the cases where cardiac trauma is suspected are seen with the surgeon, the discussion of this subject has been placed in Chapter 17.

## ANEMIA

In the presence of severe anemia, any changes observed in the heart on physical examination should be interpreted with care, for when the hemoglobin falls below 50 per cent, symptoms closely simulating heart disease may appear. The circulation time is decreased in anemia, while the cardiac output and the minute volume show an increase. These changes may be regarded as safety mechanisms to bring the amount of oxygen transported to the tissues nearer the normal level.

The heart muscle in anemia is flabby and shows the familiar "tiger" markings, chiefly in the left ventricle (Fig. 147). Of 23 cases of Addisonian anemia reported by Cabot,<sup>49</sup> hypertrophy and dilatation were observed at necropsy in 22, which agrees with other reports that an increase in heart size is present in advanced anemic states (chlorosis, secondary anemia, primary pernicious anemia). Cardiac enlargement has also been observed following the experimental production of anemia in animals.

## SYMPTOMS

The symptoms induced by anemia are breathlessness, vertigo, palpitation, weakness, and at times anginal pain on exertion. Likewise a lessening of the blood supply to the legs, particularly if some degree of sclerosis already exists, may produce intermittent claudication. The cause of both types of pain is muscle anoxemia. Cabot reported three cases of typical angina associated with pernicious anemia in patients who, at autopsy, showed no coronary change. In each instance the pain was produced by exertion and relieved by rest. If advanced coronary disease is absent, complete relief of the angina is possible in these cases following intensive treatment of the anemia and improvement in the blood count.

## SIGNS

In advanced anemia, cardiac enlargement may be evident on percussion. The heart sounds are usually weak. Systolic murmurs are often present in the region of the apex and at the base, and their quality differs in no respect from those murmurs heard in patients who have actual valvular disease. The murmur at the apex is considered to be secondary to a relative dilatation of the mitral ring with the production of mitral regurgitation.



FIG. 147. "Tiger mottling" in anemia.

Dilatation of the aorta and pulmonary artery may be accompanied by murmurs in these areas. In severe cases, diastolic murmurs have been described. Consequently considerable care must be taken in anemic individuals to avoid making the diagnosis of heart disease, since the murmurs of anemia may simulate mitral stenosis. Advanced untreated anemia may ultimately cause congestive manifestations, as Cabot's series of autopsied cases have demonstrated. However, where breaks in compensation have occurred, pre-existing heart disease of another type has usually been the cause, the anemia merely adding the final load that precipitates cardiac failure.



When asphyxial blood is perfused through the coronary arteries, it produces changes in the electrocardiogram similar to those seen when a coronary vessel is clamped. Such evidence suggests that the changes brought about by anemia may be confused with those that arise secondary to a coronary occlusion. In these instances it has been suggested that the change in the RS-T interval in anemia is caused by a high concentration of locally produced metabolites.

### MANAGEMENT

When the anemia is controlled, all cardiac signs and symptoms may disappear. The heart size, if determined by accurate methods, will be found to be smaller. The various murmurs may no longer be heard, and the anginal pain is no longer experienced. Even in the presence of coronary disease, improvement in the blood picture may often sufficiently raise the threshold to pain on ordinary exertion. Re-examination of a number of patients efficiently treated for progressive pernicious anemia, after the blood count is normal, reveals only the signs of cardiovascular disease that one would expect to encounter in any similar group of patients at the same age period.

## PULMONARY HEART DISEASE (Cor Pulmonale)

Increase of pressure in the systemic circulation is followed sooner or later by hypertrophy of the left ventricle, and hypertensive heart disease follows. If the pressure in the pulmonary circulation is increased, either suddenly by a large pulmonary embolism or failure of the left ventricle, or more gradually by mitral disease or chronic pulmonary fibrosis, we speak of the resulting condition as cor pulmonale or pulmonary heart disease.

### ACUTE COR PULMONALE

#### ETIOLOGY

The sudden right ventricular strain and dilatation that follows a large pulmonary embolus has been designated acute cor pulmonale by McGinn and White.<sup>216</sup> Death in Case 29 was hastened by the rupture of an aortic aneurysm into the pulmonary artery and the sudden increase in the pressure in the lesser circulation. Venous thrombosis following operative procedures has been shown to be the most common source of the emboli causing acute cor pulmonale.

#### SYMPTOMS AND SIGNS

The production of acute cor pulmonale requires the blocking of at least 60 per cent of the pulmonary arterial circulation. The symptoms are sudden in onset and consist of severe chest pain and dyspnea; these are

usually quickly followed by signs of shock. Death very often occurs suddenly after a massive occlusion of one of the main branches of the pulmonary artery, while after a less extensive obstruction, survival may be attended by signs of right-sided cardiac failure. Cardiac size may increase, particularly to the right, and venous engorgement may appear. Electrocardiographic alterations resembling those produced by acute coronary occlusion may be observed, but, unlike those produced by coronary accidents, the changes brought about by pulmonary embolism usually fade in a few days as balance is restored (see Fig. 251).

The management of acute cor pulmonale has been included under the cardiac emergencies (page 509).

### CHRONIC COR PULMONALE

The gradual replacement of lung areas by scar tissue and the obliteration of many branches of the pulmonary artery produces in some cases an interference with the blood flow. Consequently a strain is placed upon the right ventricle and in time hypertrophy develops, and later a right-sided heart failure may appear.

#### ETIOLOGY

Chronic cor pulmonale may be secondary to a number of diseases of the lung. Emphysema, tuberculosis, and pneumoconiosis commonly produce it, while primary pulmonary endarteritis obliterans (Ayerza's disease), a rare condition, is invariably accompanied by the signs of chronic pulmonary heart disease. Chest deformities may place a strain on the right ventricle, while metastatic carcinomatous infiltration of pulmonary arterioles may produce the same effect in some cases.

Chronic cor pulmonale may develop at any age. Since the lesions most apt to initiate the process occur in older people, most of the instances encountered clinically fall in these groups. Primary pulmonary arteritis, however, often occurs in younger patients.

Enlargement of the right ventricle, dilatation of the pulmonary artery, and an increase in size of the right auricle are the main pathologic changes that occur in the heart. Elevated pressure in the pulmonary circuit may also lead to atheroma of these vessels. This condition, however, must not be confused with the change that takes place in the endothelium in cases of pulmonary endarteritis obliterans.

#### SYMPTOMS

The symptoms of chronic cor pulmonale are those of the underlying pulmonary disease in addition to the symptoms that result from strain and failure of the right side of the heart. Dyspnea, cyanosis, hemoptysis, clubbing of the fingers and toes may be secondary to the pulmonary disease. Polycythemia often appears. The signs and symptoms that direct attention to the heart are venous engorgement, the typical cardiac silhouette (see Fig. 148A), the accentuation of the pulmonic second sound.

and at times a pulmonic systolic murmur. Extreme cyanosis ("black cardiacs") accompanies advanced degrees of pulmonary sclerosis that may occur in some cases of chronic cor pulmonale. Arrhythmias do not very often complicate the picture.

#### DIAGNOSIS

A bedside demonstration of right ventricular enlargement is difficult in these patients owing to the low diaphragm and the emphysema. The right ventricle, moreover, faces anteriorly, and changes in its size tend to produce alterations that are not appreciated by percussion. The electrocardiogram in pulmonary heart disease shows a right axis deviation (see Fig. 148B) and for this reason is valuable in diagnosis.

The problem of differentiating between symptoms of pulmonary origin and those caused by cardiac insufficiency often arises. Additional laboratory tests may be valuable in helping the clinician out of this difficulty. The most useful of these are the measurement of the venous pressure and the arm to lung time (ether method) and the lung to tongue time (decholin method minus the ether time).<sup>257</sup> Abnormal circulatory measurements point to myocardial failure.

In contrast to acute cor pulmonale, the chronic form may show a slow progression over a number of years. Resistance to pneumonia is generally poor, consequently this disease takes a heavy toll, particularly among old people. Circulatory failure is also a common cause of death and is apt to follow a chronic course. The prognosis in most cases depends upon the nature of the underlying pulmonary or cardiac lesion.

#### MANAGEMENT

The general plan of management is based upon the nature of the disturbance giving rise to the cor pulmonale. When heart failure appears, the usual measures are employed, including rest, digitalis, and diuretics (page 74). If cyanosis deepens, oxygen is useful (page 98).

A further discussion of the effect of asthma on the heart and the treatment of asthma complicating heart disease will be found in Chapter 16.

### ILLUSTRATIVE CASE

#### CHRONIC PULMONARY HEART DISEASE (COR PULMONALE) SECONDARY TO BRONCHIAL ASTHMA OF LONG DURATION

Case 88. E. W., a salesman of 43, was first seen in August, 1938 complaining of shortness of breath and cough. Frequent attacks of asthma following respiratory infections had been present since childhood. Cough was continuous for the past ten years increasing in severity during the winter. Dyspnea was marked.

PHYSICAL EXAMINATION showed cyanosis and emphysema. The heart sounds were distant and regular. Rate 100. No murmurs were heard BP. 110/80. The liver was palpable and tender a few centimeters below the right costal margin. Slight ankle edema.

LABORATORY DATA. The electrocardiogram showed a right axis deviation (Fig. 148B). The roentgenogram showed cardiac enlargement and an increase in the region of the

pulmonary conus (Fig. 148A). There was also enlargement in the region of the right ventricle. The Wassermann was negative. The blood count showed: R.B.C. 5,200,000 and W.B.C. 9,200.

**CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS.** A. Etiologic: Chronic cor pulmonale secondary to bronchial asthma. B. Anatomic. Cardiac enlargement. C. Physiologic: Normal sinus rhythm.

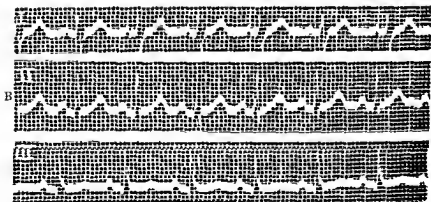
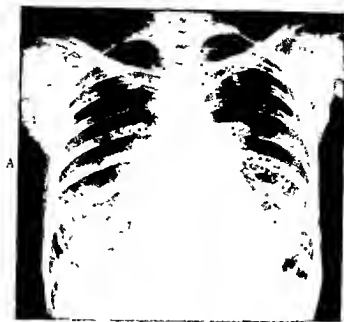


FIG. 148. A. Roentgenogram. Note dilatation of pulmonic conus. B. The electrocardiogram. Note presence of right axis deviation.

Early (right-sided) cardiac failure. D. Functional Classification: Class 3. Therapeutic Classification: Class C.

**Discussion.** The history of attacks of asthma for many years and the marked emphysema discovered on physical examination in this patient furnish the necessary background for the diagnosis of chronic cor pul-

monale. The presence of right-sided heart failure was indicated by the cyanosis, engorged jugulars, large liver, and peripheral edema. The roentgenogram and the electrocardiogram completed the picture.

The precipitating cause of the failure was not evident from the history. It may have followed the most recent upper respiratory infection. Treatment was directed toward the cardiac failure, and bed rest and digitalis were prescribed. Digitalization was accomplished in one week, but the cough continued. Ammonium chloride in 1.0 Gm. (15 grains) doses was given every four hours, and codeine sulfate 30 mg. ( $\frac{1}{2}$  grain) was useful on a few occasions at night. During the second week much relief was obtained from two intravenous injections of mercupurin (2 cc.) at five-day intervals, although at the time they were given no edema was evident.

The patient was allowed to be out of bed at the end of the second week. Digitalis maintenance dosage was continued, and at the beginning of the third week he was referred for study of his bronchial asthma (page 462). Since he was local agent for a steamship company, he was advised to seek transfer to a branch office in the south where better climatic conditions were known to prevail.

## TUMORS

Tumors of the heart and pericardium are very rarely the cause of cardiovascular symptoms. All too often they are discovered by the pathologist when the possibility of their presence was not even considered by the clinician. On reviewing the rather extensive literature on the subject, we note that every kind of tumor may involve both heart and pericardium. Secondary metastatic growths are much more common and can invade the heart from almost any location in the body. Primary growth, both benign and malignant types, likewise have been reported.

### Types

**Primary Growths.** About 80 per cent of all primary tumors that invade the heart are benign myomas, while the malignant tumors are nearly always sarcomas. The benign tumors have been known to arise from the auricles (usually the left) and interauricular septum; and the malignant tumors, while also showing predilection for the auricles as a site of origin, are usually found on the right side. The reason is unknown.<sup>423</sup> Many of the tumors are pedunculated (see Fig. 146) and fill the heart cavity from which they take their origin. Some have been found to break off and act as ball valves. Others may invade and replace the myocardial structures or may involve the pericardium and compress the heart. The conduction system may also be affected and heart block produced (see Case 81).

Secondary involvement of the heart by a malignant growth may occur as part of a widespread dissemination or by extension from a

neighboring organ. The tumor cells generally reach the heart by way of the blood stream, the lymphatic channels playing a much less important role. Carcinomatous metastases to the heart are more common than sarcomatous, but both occur.

Metastatic growths may arise from any part of the heart, but the right side is more often and more extensively involved than the left. The activity of the heart often prevents metastatic growths. Later, if these processes do gain a foothold, their growth is slow, and the heart may compensate for either invasion or compression for a long time. When cardiac failure does occur in the absence of a satisfactory etiologic explanation, particularly if a malignant process has been previously demonstrated in any organ of the body, the possibility of tumor of the heart or pericardium should be kept in mind.

## ILLUSTRATIVE CASES

### CARDIAC COMPRESSION AND FAILURE FOLLOWING METASTATIC TUMOR INFILTRATION—AUTOPSY

**Case 89.** G. W., a Polish-American mechanic of 54, was admitted to the Philadelphia General Hospital on November 9, 1938, complaining of cough, hoarseness, dyspnea and swelling of the feet.

**HISTORY.** Symptoms appeared four weeks prior to admission when the cough, that had been present for 20 years, became more severe and was followed by persisting hoarseness. Shortness of breath was noted about this time, increasing to orthopnea on admission. Edema of the feet at night was present four weeks before entry. On admission this had advanced to the lower sacral region. Past medical, family and social histories were negative.

**PHYSICAL EXAMINATION.** A thin cyanotic white male, B.P. 94/60. Veins of the neck engorged as well as the veins of the axilla and anterior chest wall. Trachea in the midline. Chest emphysematous. Dulness to percussion over both lung bases. Coarse, musical inspiratory râles heard over both sides. Left cardiac border 14.0 cm. to the left of the midsternal line in the sixth interspace. Heart sounds weak and distant. No murmurs. Rhythm regular. Liver edge at umbilicus. Pitting edema of the lower extremities.

**LABORATORY DATA.** All urine examinations were negative. Kahn negative. Blood count hemoglobin 78 per cent (Sahli); R.B.C. 4,200,000, W.B.C. 7,200; differential normal. Sputum negative for tubercle bacilli.

The electrocardiogram (Fig. 149B) showed diminution of the amplitude of the QRS complexes.

Bronchoscopic examinations showed paralysis of the left vocal cord, extrinsic in type. There was no evidence of malignancy in the bronchial tree.

**Roentgen examinations:** (Fig. 149A) (A) the initial study showed a dilated and enlarged heart and fluid in both lung bases. (B) three weeks later showed a smaller heart, less pulmonary congestion, and a large pulmonary conus. (C) taken six weeks later showed a diffuse haziness over the left lower hemithorax. The left cardiac border was blurred with considerable dense fuzziness about the left hilum. Roentgen-ray diagnosis. Mediastinal adenopathy, most likely malignant, displacing the heart.

**CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS.** A. Etiologic. Metastatic tumor. Cardiac compression (?). B. Anatomic. Cardiac enlargement. C. Physiologic. Congestive failure due to cardiac compression. Normal sinus rhythm. D. Functional Classification; Class 4. Therapeutic Classification: Class E.

**AUOPSY.** Ostia and valves unchanged. Upper sections of the myocardium were densely infiltrated by tumor. The whole thoracic cavity seemed to be crowded by a large tumor mass. The layers of the pericardium were involved by the growth and could not be separated. The tumor was nodular, yellowish-white in color and very firm in consistency. The large vessels of the mediastinum were patent. The microscopic sections showed the invasion of the myocardial structure by the tumor cells. There was a primary carcinoma of the lung with metastasis to regional lymph nodes and liver as well as the extensions to the pericardium and myocardium.

**Discussion.** The increasing dyspnea, weakness, and cough complained of by the patient centered all attention on the cardiovascular system, and

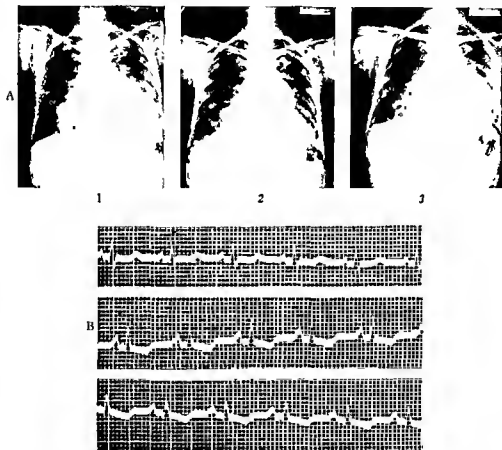


FIG. 149. A. Roentgen studies. 1, November 14, 1938. 2, December 7, 1938. 3, January 2, 1939. For explanation see text. (Courtesy X-Ray Department, Philadelphia General Hospital.) B. The electrocardiogram. Note decreased voltage of the QRS groups and depression of S-T intervals in leads 2 and 3.

he was admitted to the hospital as a case of cardiac decompensation. Further study, however, revealed no cause for the failure. Finally the aphonia and the nodule observed on the left border of the roentgenogram in the region of the pulmonary artery in the absence of mitral disease

shifted attention from the heart. A neoplasm was suspected, but from the data available its primary location and exact nature remained obscure.

In carcinoma of the lung, the possibility of cardiac and pericardial invasion must not be overlooked. In a recent study of 1082 cases of malignant disease coming to autopsy, Scott and Garvin<sup>337</sup> reported metastasis to the heart and pericardium in 118 or 10.9 per cent. Carcinoma of the bronchus and breast made up 48 per cent of these cases. In this patient the growth extended from the bronchus and completely encased the heart. Invasion of the cardiac structures next took place, and practically no myocardium remained (Fig. 150). It is remarkable how the residual amount of cardiac structure was capable of sustaining life in this patient for so long a time. Interference with diastolic filling finally caused death.

Rarely the invasion of the heart by a metastatic tumor growth may involve the conduction system and attract attention to the heart (see Case 81). Although few cases of tumor of the heart are diagnosed correctly prior to autopsy, the condition should at least be suspected in the presence of unexplained cardiac failure or heart block, significant alterations in the roentgenogram, collections of hemorrhagic fluid in the pleural or pericardial cavities, or any other cardiac abnormality in a patient recently treated for a malignant process anywhere in the body, but particularly in the lung or breast.

#### METASTATIC GROWTH IN RIGHT AURICLE AND VENTRICLE FROM SARCOMA OF THE KNEE—AUTOPSY

**Case 90.** M. M., a negress of 60, entered the Philadelphia General Hospital complaining of pain in the left leg for five years. For the past four years she had lost all motion in the limb, and for the past two months had noticed a hard lump on the outer aspect of the left knee; the lump had grown rapidly just prior to admission. No other symptoms were present.

**PHYSICAL EXAMINATION.** B.P. 140/90. Rhythm regular, rate rapid. No murmur. Breath sounds were harsh at the right base and a few scattered râles were present. A firm hard mass adherent to the underlying structures was present just above the left knee.

**LABORATORY DATA.** Wassermann negative. Roentgenogram: size of the heart shadow was increased with prominence of the pulmonary conus. No evidence of metastasis in the lungs. Roentgenogram of the leg showed a circular mass in the soft tissues of the lower quarter of the left femur. Posterior to the femur in the soft tissues were several dense irregular shadows.

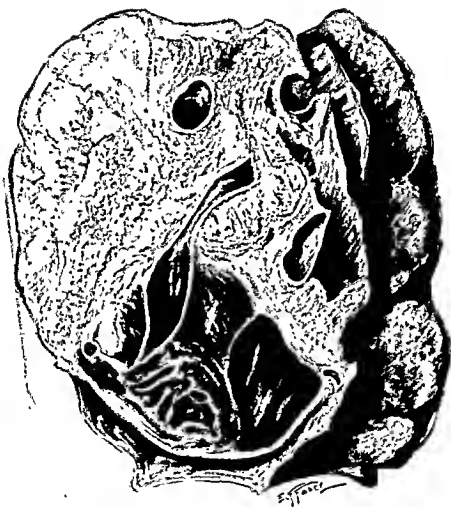
The urine on several occasions was negative and the blood count was normal.

**AUTOPSY.** The right auricular appendage contained a growth, a long tail of which descended as far as the anterior cusp of the valve. The upper and outer portions of the right ventricle were involved in a large mass of growth which extended into the cardiac chamber in the form of polypoid masses. The lungs showed metastatic sarcoma.

**Discussion.** Infiltration of the right auricle and ventricle occurred in this patient, and no symptoms were present to direct attention to the heart. The only findings were a slight increase in heart size and increase in the prominence of the pulmonary conus in the roentgen picture.

The tendency of sarcomatous growths to infiltrate the heart walls and encroach upon the cavity of the heart by the formation of polypoid





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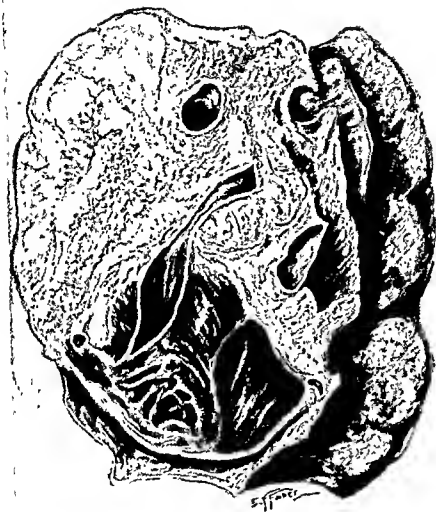
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growths is seen in this case (Fig. 151). The heart valves were *not* involved, although very rare cases have been reported where tumor cells grow upon the valves, simulating subacute bacterial endocarditis.

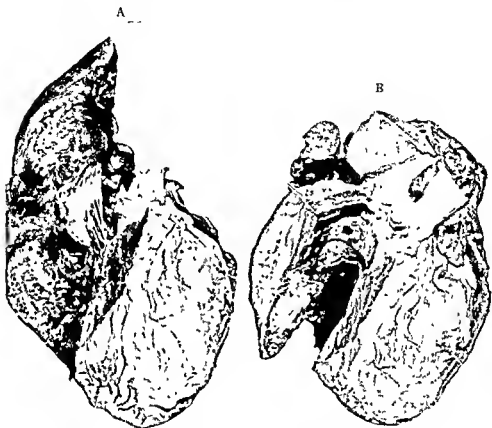


FIG. 151. A. Tumor growth in right auricular appendage. B. Invasion of wall of right ventricle. A small polypoid growth extended into the right ventricular chamber.

### HYPOTENSION

So often patients are seen who complain only of "low blood pressure." When questioned further, the fact is usually brought to light that symptoms began when the diagnosis was made by a physician at the time of a check up for life insurance or an examination for some trivial ailment. Complaints of a varied nature are laid at the door of low blood pressure, and a great deal of medicine is consumed in attempts to elevate it to a respectable level. Many times there is a tendency to lose sight of the fact that low blood pressure is after all not a disease. In most instances it is harmless unless mis-statements concerning its importance become firmly fixed in the imagination. Every physician sees many robust and healthy patients who have systolic pressures of 100 mm. of mercury or less.

## SYMPTOMS AND SIGNS

On the other hand, individuals of the asthenic type may be encountered in clinic and private practice who complain of weakness, vertigo, headache, palpitation, and vague digestive-tract disturbances. They, too, may blame their "low blood pressure" for every symptom, but again we cannot regard the matter as definitely proved; for the low blood pressure may be just as much a part of the picture as the visceroptosis or the small heart. There is no reason to believe that the low blood pressure per se accounts for all the complaints, and no reason to treat this group as "essential hypotension."

## ETIOLOGY

Hypotension may be secondary to a number of important conditions. For example, we meet it quite often during the course of acute infectious diseases. Certain chronic conditions like tuberculosis are also accompanied by arterial hypotension. The blood pressure in these instances falls in proportion to the severity of the disease, and usually results from the loss of vasomotor tone that accompanies the toxemia. The reduction of the blood volume in "shock" produces a low arterial pressure. Myocardial injuries following acute occlusion of the coronary branches are commonly associated with hypotension. Various types of endocrine gland disturbances are routinely accompanied by low blood pressure (myxedema, Addison's disease), while certain drugs like the nitrite group are capable of producing a sudden lowering of the systemic pressure.

**Orthostatic Hypotension.** There is an interesting, although uncommon, condition characterized by sudden fall in the blood pressure when the patient assumes the erect position; this may be followed by vertigo, faintness, and at times collapse. I refer to the syndrome, orthostatic hypotension. Many times patients suffering from this condition will show a decrease in the systolic blood pressure amounting to as much as 50 mm. of mercury when they stand. There is no compensatory increase in the pulse rate, and there is a similar failure of the compensatory mechanism of vasoconstriction which results in an inadequate cerebral blood flow. Many normal individuals occasionally experience a sensation of faintness if they suddenly stand erect, particularly after a hot bath, but this lack of complete circulatory adjustment is not uncommon and should not be diagnosed orthostatic hypotension. It differs from orthostatic hypotension in that the circulation makes some attempt to meet the situation. The heart rate increases, the blood pressure rises at first as the arterioles constrict, but the effort is neither sufficient nor sustained, consequently vertigo and faintness follow the fall in pressure. Orthostatic hypotension is caused by a definite impairment in function of the sympathetic nervous system, while the faulty circulatory adjustment to the erect posture may occur at some time or another in nearly every normal individual. It is most often observed during convalescence from acute infectious diseases.

## TREATMENT

The treatment of hypotension consists of appropriate measures directed toward the cause of the symptoms. The patient who has occasional vertigo due to a faulty adjustment to postural changes will be little benefited in the long run by continuous dosing with preparations containing drugs of the vasoconstrictor type. Measures should be adopted to prevent the pooling of the blood on the venous side and to increase the return to the right auricle. If we follow Nature's suggestion and place the patient in the horizontal position when abnormal sensations are experienced, improvement is prompt and complete. For prophylaxis, an elastic abdominal belt and stockings of the same material are beneficial. During convalescence from acute infectious disease and other prolonged illnesses, graded exercise and massage are of value.

**Ephedrine and Benzedrine in Orthostatic Hypotension.** Relief may be obtained from drugs that have a vasoconstrictor effect. The members of this group that have proved most efficient are ephedrine and benzedrine. Ephedrine may be given in 25 to 40 mg. doses by mouth every three or four hours, but it must be kept in mind that insomnia is a common untoward effect that follows large doses of this drug. Benzedrine in doses of 20 mg. at sufficient intervals during the day to give continuous relief is better for routine use, but here, too, insomnia is often complained of by the patient.

Allen and Magee<sup>2</sup> emphasize the importance of an individual program of administration of ephedrine in these cases. They show that the drop in the blood pressure when the patient assumes the upright position after use of large doses of these drugs is the same. However, the level of the blood pressure after the drug has been taken is higher, and this accounts for the improvement in the symptoms since the low levels that interfere with cerebral flow are not reached. Therefore, success in the management of these rare cases lies in keeping the blood pressure at a higher level continuously so that when the fall occurs with the change in position, the low level will be above the point where symptoms ordinarily occur.

THE TREATMENT OF SECONDARY HYPOTENSION is directed toward the main disease. The hypotension of shock, for example, will respond when measures are taken to restore the volume of the circulating blood, while in Addison's disease, improvement in the blood pressure accompanies the administration of the hormone from the adrenal cortex.

## THE HEART IN INFECTIONS

Infections that cause serious alterations in the cardiovascular system are acute and subacute bacterial endocarditis, rheumatism and syphilis. The remainder are much less important from a cardiac standpoint, rarely producing any serious invasion of the heart. Many times the circulatory

disturbances that are observed during the course of acute infectious diseases are brought about by failure of the peripheral vascular apparatus.

Quite often the effect of fever on the cardiac structure cannot be distinguished from that of the toxins of micro-organisms. The cloudy swelling of the heart muscle observed by the pathologist, as well as the more advanced changes that are characterized by cellular infiltration, may interfere with myocardial function. When these alterations produced by the infectious process affect the blood supply to the myocardium, more important disturbances often result. Toxic substances produced by bacterial growth may also attack the conduction system, and heart block may suddenly appear during the course of the infection. These changes are usually functional and temporary and disappear as the acute infectious process subsides.

As a rule, when the course of the acute infection is a short one, the heart is able to perform efficiently, and few additional symptoms appear. If, however, the infection is severe, or if it is prolonged, signs of congestive failure may complicate the picture at any time (page 194). When these signs are accompanied by a feeble, rapid pulse, a falling blood pressure, increase in the heart size and disturbances in rhythm, we may suspect a failing myocardium. Tachycardia out of proportion to the height of the fever, particularly if accompanied by cyanosis, is an early sign that usually directs attention to the circulatory apparatus during the course of an acute infection. In pneumonia and other pulmonary diseases, cyanosis is not in itself a reliable guide, but if at any time it is accompanied by falling blood pressure, increasing venous pressure, and diminution of the pulmonic second sound, a right-sided heart failure should be suspected. The symptoms on the other hand that suggest peripheral circulatory failure are weakness, pallor, falling blood pressure, decreasing pulse pressure, tachycardia, and faint heart sounds.

Murmurs appearing during the course of acute infections are usually caused by temporary myocardial weakness, which permits a relaxation of the mitral ring and mitral regurgitation. This functional systolic murmur heard over the region of the cardiac apex many times disappears during convalescence from the infection. Rarely are these murmurs associated with actual disease of the heart valve, unless the disease is of the rheumatic type.

### TREATMENT

An accurate evaluation of the role of the peripheral circulation and of the heart itself in the production of the symptoms should precede treatment. Often this may not be possible, when symptoms of cardiac and vasomotor failure suggest the presence of both mechanisms.

Caffeine administered in the form of caffeine with sodium benzoate in 0.5 Gm. ( $7\frac{1}{2}$  grains) doses is a useful remedy in emergencies. It may be given intravenously, but the injection should be made very slowly and the drug should be well diluted. Direct stimulation of the medullary centers produced by caffeine raises the blood pressure and improves vascular

tone. It also acts directly on the heart muscle, strengthening the systolic contraction, and may increase the cardiac output. A favorable influence may likewise be exerted on the coronary flow. The untoward effects consist of mental excitement and insomnia that are produced in some patients and in the increase in the heart rate. If the tachycardia is marked, this may decrease diastolic relaxation and result in diminished cardiac output. The frequency of the administration of the drug should always depend on the effect it produces and the clinical picture of the patient.

Strychnine has lost ground in recent years in the treatment of diseases of the cardiovascular system. In the opinion of many, the drug is worthless unless used hypodermically in large doses that closely approximate the toxic limit. In single doses of 0.002 Gm. (1/30 grain) to 0.004 Gm. (1/15 grain) it increases nerve irritability which may in emergencies result in an increase in the tone of the blood vessels.

Epinephrine hydrochloride injected intravenously in doses of 0.6 to 1.0 cc. causes increased peripheral vasoconstriction, and this action can usually be relied upon. Intramuscular injections are not as efficient because of the vasoconstriction produced at the site of injection. The action of epinephrine should be a continuous one in peripheral circulatory failure, hence it is best given combined with 500 cc. of physiologic saline or the same volume of 5 per cent glucose by slow intravenous drip (2 cc. per minute). Epinephrine acts directly on the vasomotor nerve terminals to produce its constricting effect and through a similar action on the sympathetics to stimulate the heart. It should be given with great care in cases where the blood volume has been greatly reduced. By increasing the vasoconstriction already produced in these instances, it reduces still further the cardiac output by interfering with the return flow of blood to the heart, and, as Eggleston has pointed out,<sup>90</sup> in this manner aggravates the condition for which the drug was given.

Ephedrine and Posterior Pituitary. Both ephedrine and solution of posterior pituitary produce vasoconstriction but are not as certain in their action as epinephrine. Administration of ephedrine sulfate in doses of 0.03 Gm. ( $\frac{3}{8}$  grain) may be attended by excessive nervousness and insomnia, while pituitary extract in repeated doses may be followed by a loss of vasoconstrictor tone and a fall in blood pressure.

Digitalis and strophanthin should not be given in cases where the peripheral signs predominate. Even when frank cardiac failure occurs during the course of the infection, digitalis usually has little effect.

Camphor and the substances possessing a camphor-like action, such as cardiazol, are of little value. There may be some stimulation of respiration or a slight reflex effect may occur from irritation at the site of injection, but both actions are transient and weak.

In all acute infections, preventive measures are more valuable than the remedies above described. Good nursing, proper rest, a well-balanced diet, sufficient fluid intake, and if cyanosis appears, oxygen by nasal catheter



or tent (page 98) are important in this respect. Injections of 50 cc. of a 50 per cent glucose solution are helpful. When excessive fluid has been lost, the glucose can be given in larger quantities (500 to 1000 cc.) of physiologic saline. Blood transfusions under these circumstances are beneficial. Great care, however, should always be used to avoid overloading of the circulation by the injection of too large amounts of fluid. When in doubt, determination of the venous pressure by the direct method (page 54) may be valuable.

#### DIPHTHERIA

Both the success in the prevention of this disease and the prompt use of sufficient antitoxin when it does occur make cardiac sequelae rare occurrences today. Severe, untreated diphtheria, however, attacks the myocardium, and sudden death in these cases is not unknown. The diphtheria toxin causes necrosis of the heart muscle cells and the specialized tissues of the conduction system. Arrhythmias, produced by invasion of the conduction system, furnish clinical evidence of the presence of this destructive process. Marked degrees of either auriculo-ventricular heart block (page 593) or sinus arrest (page 615) may suddenly appear. In addition to the usual clinical signs of heart involvement above described, a gallop rhythm may be heard on auscultation, furnishing suggestive evidence of prolongation of the conduction time and the toxic state of the myocardium. An electrocardiographic study is valuable in revealing the extent of the damage and is generally positive in many more cases of diphtheria than the clinical findings indicate. When A-V heart block or bundle-branch block are present in this disease, the prognosis is most serious.

Diphtheria toxin may severely damage other structures that contribute to the efficiency of cardiac action, and this burden may be added to the myocardial injury. For example, paralysis of the vagus and splanchnic nerves may augment the tachycardia and add the element of peripheral circulatory failure to the picture.

If the patient survives, complete healing of the damage produced by the toxin of the diphtheria bacillus in all of these areas is the rule. Chronic heart disease does not result from diphtheria. Complete heart block, if present, does not persist, and if this conduction defect is found in later life, it cannot be viewed as the result of diphtheria in childhood.

Early and adequate treatment by antitoxin is the best therapy for the heart in diphtheria. In view of the type of damage that has been described, a convalescent period of at least three weeks is essential. When cardiac damage is extensive in the severe cases, small injections of glucose are invaluable. The additional measures are the same as are employed when cardiac involvement follows any infection.

#### SCARLET FEVER

There is a great deal of difference of opinion regarding the production of an endocardial lesion by the streptococcus that has been shown to

stand in an etiologic relationship to scarlet fever. The earlier cardiac signs may be associated with the effect of a soluble toxin, but close inspection shows that these are all analogous to the changes that occur when rheumatic fever follows an attack of acute tonsillitis. Even articular manifestations may be associated with scarlatinal infection, although these are milder, are associated with less effusion, and tend to involve smaller joints. The valvular involvement that is described as scarlatinal is identical with rheumatic endocarditis. Similar electrocardiographic alterations are produced. Consequently the bulk of present day evidence points to the fact that scarlet fever is merely the activating agent. The patient quite often has a rheumatic constitution and a positive family history.

I observed a similar response following erysipelas involving the face and scalp in a child of seven. Two weeks after the initial infection subsided leaving the boy as bald as an onion a typical attack of rheumatic fever with joint manifestations developed. A mitral lesion was discovered a month later. During the course of the intervening years, the development of mitral stenosis has been followed. The last examination, 20 years after the attack of erysipelas, showed mitral stenosis and mitral insufficiency with considerable cardiac enlargement.

#### INFLUENZA

Although many symptoms of a cardiovascular nature are frequently observed following influenza, we cannot say that this disease causes any permanent damage. A cardiac examination at the height of the disease will reveal the usual changes associated with any other febrile disorder, with the exception, perhaps, of the relative bradycardia. During the course of influenza, other arrhythmias such as premature contractions and marked sinus irregularities, are not infrequent. The pathology in this disease is obscure. However, if structural alterations do occur, as some observers claim, they completely disappear following convalescence.

The postinfluenzal symptoms are usually shortness of breath, precordial distress, palpitation, weakness, and exhaustion. All appear on slight exertion and may be regarded in most instances as manifestations of neuro-circulatory asthenia (page 410).

#### PNEUMONIA

The pneumococcus infection does not in itself cause serious heart involvement, unless the endocardium is attacked (page 185), or suppurative pericarditis develops following extension of the process from the lung (page 171). Pneumonia may prove to be a most serious complication in the presence of advanced heart disease. The cardiac failure occurring late in the course of this disease usually shows a poor response to the usual measures. Routine digitalization of all pneumonia cases is not recommended. However, the use of the drug in the presence of auricular flutter, auricular fibrillation or congestive failure is indicated. As a rule, water,

sugar, salt, and oxygen are the most useful remedies in the treatment of the circulatory collapse in pneumonia.

#### TUBERCULOSIS

The effect of tuberculosis on the heart may be considered from many angles. The tubercle bacillus itself only rarely attacks the heart. When it does, the pericardium and myocardium are invaded by direct extension from a neighboring focus or as a part of a general miliary involvement. In the course of the latter process, the endocardium may be seen to contain small tubercles of the miliary type at autopsy. They are never important clinically. However, the pericardial process may heal in some cases with the subsequent deposition of calcium and by its constriction produce grave interference with diastolic filling (page 182).

In some cases an active tuberculous infection may produce alterations in either rate or rhythm of the heart that will attract attention of the patient toward the cardiac mechanism (case 64). Neurocirculatory asthenia not uncommonly accompanies tuberculosis.

Alterations in the lungs during the course of the disease may in some cases place a strain on the right side of the heart, and the symptoms of chronic cor pulmonale may be observed (page 426). In other instances, a sudden pneumothorax may produce pain suggestive of coronary occlusion. If the mediastinal structures are displaced in advanced phthisis by adhesions, a variety of confusing cardiac signs appear.

Tuberculosis of the lungs is not evidence against the diagnosis of organic heart disease. However, because of the bed rest usually prescribed for the tuberculous patient, congestive failure seldom appears. Pulmonary tuberculosis often complicates congenital stenosis of the pulmonary valve (page 346) as a result of inadequate circulation in the lungs. Likewise in engorgement of the vessels of the lung that is seen in mitral stenosis, pulmonary tuberculosis is rare but has been observed.

The treatment of active tuberculosis of the pericardium and the heart has been discussed elsewhere (page 175).

#### FOCAL INFECTION

The concept that infection in the teeth, tonsils, sinuses, gallbladder, cervix or gastro-intestinal tract is responsible for a variety of diseases has gained headway in recent years. Although we possess no entirely satisfactory criteria for determining the presence or absence of infection in many of these localities, the teeth and tonsils seem to bear the brunt of the attack of the focal infection enthusiasts. Consequently many unnecessary operations have been performed that are not without danger in patients who have heart disease. Bacteria gain entrance into the blood stream at times following these procedures and in some cases a fatal endocarditis results (page 197).

All the diseases of unknown etiology that affect the heart have at one time or another been blamed on the tonsils. Reimann and Havens<sup>310</sup> point

out that one-third of all surgical operations performed in a group of nearly 40,000 cases were tonsillectomies. The extraction of diseased tonsils prevents the recurrence of quinsy and acute tonsillitis and may decrease the frequency of attacks of acute rheumatic fever. However, we must remember that this procedure does not offer to all patients a guarantee against the occurrence of rheumatic infection and subsequent heart disease. Many studies of groups of tonsillectomized children that have been made by Kaiser<sup>178</sup> and others<sup>3</sup> reveal no great decrease in the incidence of rheumatic heart disease following operation when compared to control groups. In view of the number of tonsillectomies performed today, if this were the solution of the problem of rheumatic infection, the incidence of this disease by this time ought to show a decided decrease. Such is not the case. On the other hand, tonsillectomy itself may be followed by a number of serious complications. By no means the least important of these is a violent flare-up of a smoldering rheumatic state.

It is unfortunate that the wide acceptance of the attractive theory of focal infection has elevated it in the minds of many to the position of a proved fact. I believe that the treatment of heart disease by the eradication of these foci should always be governed by the circumstances in each case. For example, pain, tenderness, swelling, and lymph-node involvement speak for the presence of infection in a tooth, and its removal should be considered. Roentgen films alone should not decide the issue for they are often unreliable in these cases. Similarly, only tonsils that show a persistent redness accompanied by injection of the anterior pillars, painful swallowing, enlarged regional lymph nodes and systemic evidence of infection should be considered diseased, and their removal recommended. I do not believe that either the size of the tonsils or the cheesy material expressed from their crypts should be accepted as adequate evidence for a mandatory tonsillectomy. As a matter of fact, the debris that we so often demonstrate in the tonsillar crypts is harmless. When treatment is begun for the patient's condition as a whole, the lymphoid tissue in the pharynx and throat that previously suggested the presence of infection may take on a quite different appearance. Needless to say, surgical treatment of all foci of infection should be delayed until a complete survey of the patient has been made. Surgical attacks on accessible foci in cardiac cases should never be recommended unless the evidence in each case leaves little doubt as to the presence of infection. Prophylactic tonsillectomies are not justified. The same rule should apply with respect to the teeth. It still remains to be proved that any primary disease of the heart is the direct result of infection in the teeth.

## THE HEART IN PREGNANCY

In the management of the cardiac patient during pregnancy, many situations are encountered that demand a thorough knowledge of the diagnosis and prognosis of heart disease. Numerous questions are likewise asked by patients contemplating marriage that call for an appraisal of the circulatory status and an estimation of the probable effect of the additional burden of pregnancy. Certain rules of practice may be adopted in applying our knowledge of heart disease to these special situations. These may be better understood if the fundamental principles upon which they are based are first briefly discussed.

## THE PROBLEM

During pregnancy the heart has more work to do. This is not the result of any single factor, but is brought about by the many physiologic alterations that take place as gestation advances. To begin with, the gain in weight accompanying pregnancy places an extra demand on the circulation. Moreover, since this gain is also a local one, the postural alterations produced may have a tendency in some individuals to add an extra burden during the course of pregnancy. Too much significance, however, should not be placed on this single factor of increased body weight as a cause of heart strain, for Jensen has cited four cases from literature where improvement in the circulation took place at the time of fetal death and not following delivery.<sup>172</sup>

Aside from the patient's increase in weight, the continued advance in uterine size with its increasing vascularity is an additional factor that adds to the work of the heart. From this standpoint, as Burwell has pointed out,<sup>47</sup> pregnancy increases the cardiac burden by the development of wide communicating channels in the uterine wall in the manner of an arteriovenous fistula.

Successive pregnancies probably have no permanent effect on the vascular bed itself. There is nothing to prove that a "toxin" is produced to activate changes in this area or to produce even a temporary vasoconstrictor effect that may increase the cardiac load.

With elevation of the basal metabolic rate, extra work is placed on the heart; in fact, the operation of total thyroid ablation was planned to decrease the metabolism and improve the circulation by decreasing the cardiac load. In pregnancy the thyroid gland enlarges, and it is natural to suppose that an increase in the work of the heart takes place and accompanies the increase that is observed in the basal metabolic rate.

Recent studies confirm the fact that the circulating blood volume is increased during pregnancy. Although there is some difference in the figures obtained by the use of the various gas and dye methods, the increase in some cases has been found to be as high as 40 per cent. Consequently, again we have proof of an increase in the cardiac load.

Clinical and laboratory studies indicate that the normal heart adequately meets these demands placed upon it during pregnancy. A slight increase in the blood pressure, particularly the diastolic, balances the increased peripheral resistance, the pulse rate quickens, and the minute volume increases, while the circulation time remains unchanged.

### EXAMINATION OF THE HEART

If we apply the ordinary methods of examination to the heart in pregnancy to detect what changes, if any, take place, the result is interesting and will lead us into a great deal of speculation.

**Change in Size of Heart.** In the first place, the medical pendulum seems to be unwilling to come to rest in regard to the question of the presence or absence of cardiac hypertrophy. However, much depends on our conception of the word "hypertrophy." The heart does increase in size, but this is entirely within the limits that would be expected when viewed in the light of the increase in body weight. The heart under the fluoroscope appears larger; in fact, the actual measurements are often increased. It must be realized, however, that as pregnancy continues the heart is elevated and perhaps rotated by the high position of the diaphragm, under which circumstance accurate determination of the cardiac size becomes difficult (Fig. 152). The cardiac shape may in some patients be considerably altered by these changes and present the appearance of mitralization (page 37).

**Change in Position of Heart.** This shift in the position of the heart may be reflected in the change in the electrical axis of the electrocardiogram, which must not be viewed as evidence in favor of hypertrophy. In pregnancy there is a tendency for an inversion of the P-wave and T-wave to occur in the third lead, and Pardee has called attention to a deep Q-wave in the same lead that may accompany a normal pregnancy (Fig. 153). All these changes in the electrocardiogram may be explained on the basis of the change in cardiac position.

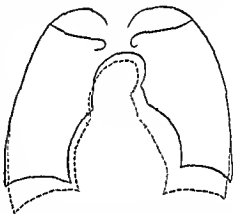


FIG. 152. Alteration in cardiac position as pregnancy advances. Dotted line indicates heart's position at third month. The solid line shows position two weeks prior to term.

**Appearance of Murmurs.** The most common finding in the obstetrical department that causes the patient to be referred for cardiac study is the presence of a murmur. Since this physical sign continues to be so intimately linked with heart disease in the minds of most physicians, further

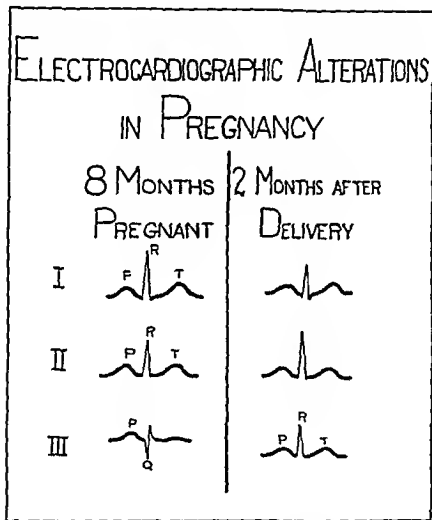


FIG. 153. The electrocardiogram in pregnancy.

special study of these patients is requested. During pregnancy a systolic murmur over the pulmonary area should cause no alarm. It is produced in many instances by the shift in cardiac position that is due to the steady elevation of the diaphragm. It is usually loudest in recumbency, and may almost disappear when the patient is in the erect position. This pulmonary systolic murmur appears after the fourth month of pregnancy. At times these functional systolic murmurs may be heard over the whole pre-

cordium, but they are usually loudest in the second interspace to the left of the sternum. Functional diastolic murmurs have been described, but I have not heard them. The pulmonic second sound may be accentuated during pregnancy because of the change in cardiac position that serves to advance the valve nearer the chest wall where its sound is more clearly heard. Before a diagnosis of heart disease is made during pregnancy, these physiologic alterations should be kept in mind. Examination of the heart during pregnancy is not easy since enlargement of the breasts makes percussion and auscultation more difficult.

**Other Diagnostic Signs and Symptoms.** To confuse the picture further, other reliable diagnostic signs and symptoms are of less value during pregnancy, for example, edema and dyspnea.

It is not at all uncommon for edema of the feet to occur in normal women toward the end of pregnancy, because of pressure on the pelvic veins and alterations in the capillary bed of the extremities.

Likewise, when dyspnea is complained of, allowance must be made for the high position of the diaphragm that crowds the lungs, and for the other anatomic and physiologic alterations just described. In the cardiac examination during pregnancy, reliance must be placed on diastolic murmurs, either apical (mitral stenosis), or basal (aortic regurgitation), harsh apical systolic murmurs in patients with positive rheumatic histories, engorgement of the neck veins, enlargement and tenderness of the liver, thrills, unmistakable displacement of the apex beat or widening of the heart at the base, serious arrhythmias like auricular fibrillation, auricular flutter, pulsus alternans, or heart block, friction sounds, and the signs of chronic hypertension or nephritis.

**Etiology.** The majority (80 per cent of our series) of patients of child-bearing age who have heart disease suffer from the rheumatic type with mitral stenosis. Active rheumatic disease, however, is rare during pregnancy. Congenital defects are present in a very small percentage of the cases, whereas hypertension, nephritis, syphilis, and arteriosclerosis can be grouped together as infrequent causes of cardiac complications (Table IX).

TABLE IX  
TYPES OF HEART DISEASE

|                         | NUMBER | PERCENTAGE |
|-------------------------|--------|------------|
| Rheumatic . . . . .     | 32     | 80         |
| Congenital . . . . .    | 2      | 5          |
| Hypertensive . . . . .  | 2      | 5          |
| Miscellaneous . . . . . | 4      | 10         |

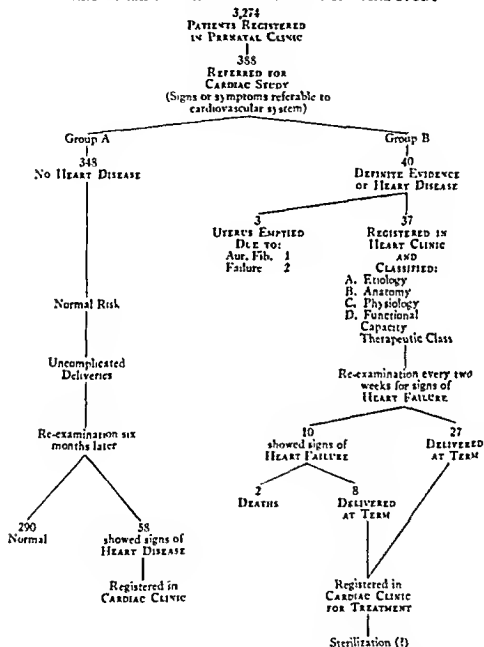
### CLASSIFICATION

For purposes of diagnosis and treatment, a working classification of the patients presenting signs or symptoms of heart disease during pregnancy is essential. Prenatal patients referred to the Cardiac Clinic of the Woman's



College Hospital after the first examination are divided into Groups A and B (Table X).

TABLE X  
HEART DISEASE DURING PREGNANCY—A CLINICAL STUDY



Group A. Patients who have systolic murmurs, questionable degrees of edema, palpitation, or dyspnea, together with a negative rheumatic history

and no abnormal alterations in cardiac size or contour, are placed in Group A. The presence of heart disease cannot be proved, and these patients (we assure the obstetricians) are excellent risks. We tell the patients that they have normal hearts as far as we are able to estimate during pregnancy. They are urged, however, to return for one examination following delivery.

In Group B are placed all the patients who have cardiac enlargement, diastolic murmurs, and any of the signs of organic heart disease above mentioned. We separate the patients belonging to this group and focus our attention on them, for they are the ones most likely to develop cardiac complications as pregnancy advances. We do not include in Group B any of the cases of mitral regurgitation, and for purposes of this study we have allowed a large number of these patients to remain in Group A. Group B is subdivided according to the classification of the American Heart Association (page 59). We consider this system most useful, inasmuch as the obstetrical risk is in large part governed by the presence or absence of manifestations of congestive failure. Likewise, placing the patient in one or the other of these groups after the study is completed is a matter of great convenience. It helps to establish proper treatment at an early date, but it does not necessarily mean that the patient will remain permanently in the group, nor does it indicate that the management will be group management and not adapted to suit the needs of the individual patient. Seventy-five per cent of our Group-B patients belong in Class I; 20 per cent in Class II, 3 per cent in Class III, and 2 per cent in Class IV.

## MANAGEMENT

Patients in Group A do not, of course, require any special care as far as the heart is concerned.

In Group B, the patients in Class I and many in Class II, if carefully watched, can usually be counted upon to come through pregnancy and delivery without complications. They report to the Cardiac Clinic once a month until the sixth month and are then seen at intervals of two weeks until they enter the hospital for delivery.

Rest should be prescribed for Group-B patients to reduce the demand made upon the heart to a degree consistent with the estimated reserve. In the absence of any signs of congestive heart failure, however, an excessive amount of rest is detrimental to the patient. Exercise of mild degree in the open air assists venous return to the heart and is decidedly beneficial.

**General Measures.** Group-B patients are advised to avoid upper respiratory infections as much as possible. As pregnancy progresses, the household duties are lightened in each case to allow the patient to keep within the limits of her cardiac reserve. This is estimated at each follow-up visit when the progress notes are recorded and the examination of the patient is completed.

The laboratory procedures indicated in cases where cardiac disease

is complicated by pregnancy, include urinalysis, Wassermann, electrocardiogram, and orthodiagram. When these are obtained and evaluated, the patient can be properly classified and her program outlined.

Follow-up visits give opportunity to check for errors in classification caused either by a mistake in interpretation of the findings or by a change in the patient's status as pregnancy advances. On these occasions the blood pressure, the respiratory rate, pulse rate, and body weight should be recorded. The feet should be inspected for signs of edema and the lung bases carefully examined. If râles persist in the lung bases, bed rest for two or three days followed by re-examination should be the routine prescription. The electrocardiograms usually do not have to be repeated unless arrhythmias are present that elude clinical detection.

### DELIVERY

All Group-B patients are admitted to the hospital two weeks before term for rest and additional observation. Pregnancy is allowed to terminate normally. Most of Class I and many of Class II patients deliver spontaneously with little trouble, although the second stage of labor is often shortened, when indicated, by the application of forceps. Ether anesthesia can be used safely for the whole group. The longer convalescent period allowed in the hospital usually means that the majority of these patients are discharged in excellent condition. Unless an earlier date is indicated for some special reason, they return in six weeks to the Cardiac Clinic for the first follow-up study.

Patients in Classes III and IV require close attention. The prognosis of Class-III patients is guarded, while those in Class IV usually have a poor prognosis. The complication that causes most concern to internist and obstetrician who work together in these cases in Classes III and IV is congestive failure. It is responsible for 74 per cent of fatalities, according to the recent report of Carr and Hamilton.<sup>52</sup> Pneumonia, pulmonary infarction, sepsis, and embolism are more frequent complications in these patients because of the influence of the congestive failure.

When congestive failure appears, it is usually during pregnancy, and rarely during labor when the strain is supposed to be the greatest. The reason may be better understood when we consider the fact that the patient is in labor a short time compared to the long period of pregnancy. Nevertheless, the influence of a poorly conducted labor in precipitating congestive failure must never be underestimated. An upper respiratory or other infection may often play a large part in imposing the additional burden that upsets the patient. The earlier in pregnancy congestive failure appears, the poorer will be the prognosis. More frequent prenatal visits of the cardiac patient to her physician are mainly for the purpose of detecting the signs of failure as early as possible. If during pregnancy a patient is seen presenting signs of advanced decompensation, some one has usually fallen down on the job.

The early recognition of congestive failure in pregnancy is not easy,

but is possible if careful examinations are carried out. The symptoms of dyspnea and palpitation, together with the signs of tachycardia and edema, must all be evaluated in the light of the physical state. On the other hand, congested neck veins, orthopnea, gallop rhythm, pulmonary edema, pulsus alternans, are all advanced signs of failure. Sudden paroxysmal dyspnea is rare as a complication of rheumatic heart disease but can occur in the presence of pulmonary overloading produced by a strong overactive right ventricle. The initial attack occurred during labor in one patient of our series who suffered from hypertensive cardiovascular disease. Although this patient was successfully delivered, death occurred during another seizure two months after discharge.

At times, in doubtful cases, estimation of the venous pressure is a very great help in the early diagnosis of congestive failure (page 54). However, congestion of the lungs should be suspected when persisting râles are heard at the bases at any routine visit during pregnancy. Râles should always be regarded as a warning of approaching danger, and bed rest and digitalis prescribed. The speed of digitalization is always determined by the condition of the patient. When improvement takes place, the drug should be continued in maintenance dosage until the time of delivery. Pregnancy offers no contraindication to the use of the usual diuretics including the mercurial group.

The extent of the bed rest will depend on the response shown to the treatment. If improvement is rapid, the patient may be allowed to be about again at an early date. Some patients, however, may have to remain at nearly total bed rest until delivered. At term the patient who can undertake but little exertion without great discomfort is in no condition to stand labor and should not be allowed to deliver spontaneously.

If the patient when first seen is in severe congestive failure, medical treatment should be given a thorough trial, since the first aim of the physician should always be to restore cardiac balance. Attention is then directed toward the termination of the pregnancy if there has been no adequate response to the measures employed. However, let me hasten to add that medical treatment seldom fails to restore enough circulatory balance to make subsequent intervention a much less dangerous measure. *Haste in these situations only increases the maternal mortality rate.*

If auricular fibrillation is present, as Mackenzie originally stated,<sup>251</sup> the prognosis should be considered more serious. However, the management remains the same. The attempt should be made to control the ventricular rate by full doses of digitalis; and if the usual satisfactory result is obtained, operative interference can be delayed until a rest period improves the risk.

The additional measures to be considered in the treatment of the decompensated patient during pregnancy differ very little from those already outlined. Dietary regulation (page 548) has for its guiding principle the administration of suitable amounts of glucose. In cases where the heart failure is attended by considerable cyanosis, oxygen, if available, will be of

great benefit, since it also increases the chances of survival of the baby (page 98). A flow of four liters per minute using the nasal-catheter apparatus is satisfactory in emergencies. Higher concentrations of oxygen should be used with great care in these patients, since nearly all of them suffer from advanced mitral stenosis. The danger of a higher percentage lies in producing bronchial irritation, cough, and pulmonary edema.

**Termination of Pregnancy.** Many facts are to be carefully considered before choosing the method to be used in terminating pregnancy. Each case must be decided on its own merits, for in this matter no set of rules can be laid down and dogmatically followed. A great deal depends upon the time the patient is first seen. If very early in pregnancy and congestive failure is already present, the outlook is serious, and therapeutic abortion is the method of choice after careful preparation of the patient. In further advanced borderline cases, the history of previous pregnancies may serve as a guide to the procedure. However, if in doubt concerning the method of choice, it is always best to do nothing, since patients with congestive failure who are subjected to the additional shock of ill-timed interference invariably do poorly. Therapeutic abortion should never be performed until congestive manifestations clear. If labor begins spontaneously to further complicate the situation, morphine should be given in an attempt to postpone delivery until circulatory balance has been restored.

**Cesarean Section.** In Class-III and Class-IV patients the operation of cesarian section has much to recommend it. It can be carried out under spinal or local anesthesia, depending on the preference of the surgeon, and in well-prepared patients can be accomplished in a very short time with but little additional strain on the circulation. Of course, the dangers of hemorrhage, shock, anesthesia and embolism are added to a poor risk, but I believe that these are more than overbalanced by the strain of a long labor.

**Sterilization** can be carried out at the time of operation if cesarean section is the method of choice. Sterilization has much to recommend it and should always be done if the heart condition is too severe to stand the strain of a normal delivery (Class III and IV patients) and when the patient with heart disease already has more children at home than her fast diminishing cardiac reserve will permit her to care for efficiently. Here again the factors present in each case will guide the selection of the proper procedure.

**Anesthetic.** There is little to fear from the anesthetic if it is wisely chosen and properly administered. Ether by the open-drop method is safe in the majority of cases. Chloroform adds a risk that is not negligible. Nitrous oxide and oxygen mixture may be used if skillfully given, while ethylene has furnished good results in clinics that are properly equipped for its use. As a general rule, anesthetics administered by mouth or injection are not as satisfactory as the ones administered by inhalation. Once injected, the action is harder to control, and in some cases postoperative complications occur. No matter how trivial the operative procedure, or how good the risk appears to be, cardiac cases at all times require careful

handling. Consequently psychic shocks, worry, insomnia are all indications to postpone operations until the patient is in better condition. Neglect of this last principle may occasionally be followed by disaster.

The use of pituitrin to speed labor in cardiac patients is to be condemned, for in the conduct of labor in the presence of advanced heart disease, speed is not as essential as the conservation of the patient's energy. Observation of the blood pressure, respiratory rate, and heart rate should be made frequently during labor. The neck veins and the patient's color should be watched closely. Increase in the heart rate, congestion in the neck veins, and râles in the chest are danger signals. Many cardiac patients are unable to stand the recumbent position and should be delivered with the back of the table elevated to about 30 degrees. The Trendelenberg position should never be used.

Usually, if cardiac failure is avoided by the combined efforts of cardiologist and obstetrician during pregnancy, it does not appear during labor or the puerperium. If it does appear after delivery, some other precipitating cause must be suspected and searched for. Sepsis, infarction, phlebitis, and mastitis are a few of the more common causes to be kept in mind.

#### PUERPERIUM

The patient must not be neglected during the puerperium, since following the marked fall in the intra-abdominal pressure and the consequent shift in the cardiac axis, circulatory accidents may be occasionally encountered. Sand bags on the abdomen are recommended by some obstetricians to maintain pressure and lessen the shock of sudden circulatory readjustments.

#### SHOULD PREGNANCY BE CONTEMPLATED BY THE CARDIAC PATIENT?

This question is difficult to answer offhand, but may be satisfactorily worked out for each individual case when all the facts are carefully set down. The type of heart disease present and its severity should first be considered. If advanced rheumatic heart disease is discovered and the cardiac reserve is low, or if the patient has already survived one or more attacks of congestive failure, the decision must be in the negative. In established but less advanced cases, the decision may be more difficult. If the patient has had rheumatic heart disease for some time and has been under the constant supervision of the family physician, no one is better suited to give this opinion. Previous entries on the office card give valuable clues to the degree of progress of the patient's cardiac lesion and are most useful. If the decision is still difficult, it is best to make a mistake on the safe side than to be too optimistic. Generally it is satisfactory to place the facts squarely before the patient and her husband and outline the risks that must be assumed. The station in life and the economic condition of the

family in question are points to be weighed in the balance. In other words, will the patient be in a position to take good care of herself during the pregnancy? Unfortunately, for each patient who seeks this advice before marriage, the physician will have many who come in for advice when pregnancy is already present.

Opinions governing subsequent pregnancies cannot be entirely based upon observations made during the initial one. The cardiac lesion, since it is usually of the rheumatic type, may be progressing, in which event the reserve diminishes. Many times it is difficult to say whether this is the effect of the first pregnancy on the heart or whether it is the result of an advancing rheumatic infection. If some years have gone by since the first pregnancy, the age of the patient must be given due consideration, since older patients with the same degree of damage do not do as well as the younger ones. Finally, it may be stated as a general rule that if the heart lesion is trivial, the patient may have two or at the most three children. If, on the other hand, the lesion shows signs of progressing, and particularly if the patient is over 30, she should realize that the second pregnancy may not be as smooth as the initial one and that the risk assumed is far greater. She will then usually be content with one child. I must admit that I have seen many instances where a second pregnancy was successfully weathered in spite of advanced rheumatic heart disease, when the patient had been warned against it.

Gilchrist<sup>115</sup> studied 109 cases of fatal cardiac rheumatism in order to discover the effect of repeated pregnancies on the course of the disease. A comparison was made with males, nulliparae and parous women, regarding the average age of death, mode of dying, duration of the cardiac disease and the rate of progression to fatal termination. No significant difference was found in the duration of the disease in nulliparous and parous women. Auricular fibrillation, Gilchrist found, is not necessarily an indication of an additional burden placed on the heart during the child-bearing period. Its incidence, he believes, is largely determined by the length of survival from the time of the first involvement of the heart. Women dying from congestive heart failure (the mode of death in 92 per cent of the whole group) had families averaging 4.5 children each, a fact that supports the contention that the strain of frequent child-bearing brings earlier death. Gilchrist concludes that one or perhaps two pregnancies have little effect on the course of the disease in the majority of the cases, but repeated pregnancies will definitely shorten the life span of women suffering from rheumatic heart disease, since they increase the incidence of congestive cardiac failure.

#### SUMMARY

#### THE HEART IN PREGNANCY

##### I. THE RISK

1. All patients in Group A (Table X) do well. If carefully managed those in Group B (Classes I and II) give little trouble.

2. In patients who have established mitral lesions (usually stenosis) with little or no cardiac enlargement the risk is slight.
3. As a rule the risk is directly proportional to the size of the heart. Therefore, routine fluoroscopic examinations should be made during pregnancy on all patients who have established cardiac lesions.
4. The most important single factor in the determination of the risk is the cardiac reserve. This can be estimated by inquiry concerning patients' ability to perform ordinary household duties without discomfort. Valve lesions *per se* have little influence on the risk.
5. Danger signals: Signs of failure appearing at any examination, auricular fibrillation or great increase in cardiac size (Apex beat or left border in axilla), and a previous history of congestive cardiac failure.
6. Good prenatal care and co-operation of patient will greatly improve the risk in many cases and permit delivery of a normal child at term.

## II. RULES FOR MANAGEMENT

1. If cardiac lesion slight: one or two pregnancies permitted. If cardiac lesion moderate: one pregnancy permitted. Pregnancy should be forbidden in cases showing:
  - (a) Previous history of heart failure
  - (b) In presence of an advanced lesion with auricular fibrillation.
2. When patient who presents contraindications to pregnancy is seen during the first three months, empty the uterus. If seen later: treat congestive failure (bed rest and other measures), then do cesarean section. **OPERATIVE INTERFERENCE IS CONTRAINDICATED IN THE PRESENCE OF CONGESTIVE FAILURE!**
3. The patient should be examined frequently during the later months of pregnancy. **IT IS EASIER TO PREVENT CONGESTIVE FAILURE THAN IT IS TO TREAT IT!**
4. For delivery or operative interference inhalation type of anesthetic is preferable: ether, ethylene alone or combined with local.
5. When pregnancy is complicated by a cardiac lesion the best results are obtained when pregnancy is allowed to follow a normal course. The second stage of labor may be shortened by forceps.
6. Induction may be a more serious trial than normal labor at term. Acute left ventricular failure followed attempted induction in one case in our series.



## ALLERGY AND THE HEART

By RICHARD A. KERN, M.D.\*

There is as yet no proof that the heart itself can be the site of an allergic reaction. That is to say, no one has demonstrated in the heart, after exposure to an allergen, the occurrence of edema or of smooth muscle spasm, the basic phenomena of the allergic response. There is, however, good clinical evidence that an allergic reaction may be the trigger mechanism which may precipitate certain symptoms referable to the heart; notably, some of the cases of paroxysmal auricular tachycardia. A similar relationship has been suggested between an allergic reaction and other cardiac diseases, but the evidence is far from convincing. Of major importance, from the viewpoint of clinical medicine, is the very serious role which allergic disease, especially of the respiratory tract, so often plays in patients who are suffering from some form of cardiac disorder.

## CARDIAC CONDITIONS PROVOKED BY AN ALLERGIC MECHANISM

It is an axiom that the purely allergic reaction is wholly reversible. An urticarial wheal disappears without leaving behind it any trace of structural change. The nasal mucosa, which for weeks has been the site of marked edema during the hay fever season, reverts to normal within a few hours of the removal of the offending pollen from the inspired air. The smooth muscle of gut or bronchial tree, even after many episodes of allergic spasm, shows at most a very trifling, and usually no hypertrophy.

If this reversibility of an allergic reaction be as true of a possible cardiac allergy as it is of allergic manifestations in other organs and tissues, then in the intervals between allergic attacks the heart should be normal according to every criterion of examination. Furthermore, it should be possible to elicit the allergic response on adequate exposure to that to which the person is sensitive, and he should remain free of symptoms so long as such exposure is avoided.

These conditions are rarely fulfilled in patients known to be allergic and who have symptoms of cardiac disease. As a rule such patients give some evidence of structural or functional cardiac abnormality throughout the interval between allergic episodes. At this point the question might be raised: Will not a permanent structural change result at times from frequent repetition or prolonged duration of an allergic response, as, for

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example, nasal mucous polyps in perennial allergic rhinitis? True: but before that final stage of polyposis is reached, there has been a long period without permanent structural change, simply an edema which promptly subsides when there is *no longer any exposure to the allergen* which provoked it. Only rarely, even during the beginnings of symptoms, does one encounter in the intervals between allegedly allergic cardiac episodes a heart that is altogether normal in structure and function. As a rule, one gets the impression that the allergic reaction is an added factor which provokes symptoms in a heart that has already been damaged by some other disease process.

Even when the heart appears to be normal between attacks, one is not justified in concluding, when cardiac symptoms are produced on exposure to a substance to which the patient is sensitive, that the heart itself is the site of the allergic reaction. The reaction might have occurred elsewhere and might have affected the heart indirectly by way of nerve pathways. This will be discussed further under paroxysmal auricular tachycardia.

This discussion may seem unduly theoretical for a clinical text, but it has this fundamental significance: If the cardiac condition were due only to allergy, then its management would call for treatment primarily and perhaps solely along allergic lines. But if, as is the rule, one is dealing not only with allergy but with a heart that is the site of some additional pathologic process, then allergic therapy is only an incident in the management of the underlying cardiac disease.

## PAROXYSMAL AURICULAR TACHYCARDIA

This is perhaps the outstanding cardiac disorder in which an allergic mechanism may play a part. The systematic description of paroxysmal auricular tachycardia, its etiology, diagnosis, and treatment, will be found in Chapter 12 (page 382); the present discussion is limited to the allergic aspects.

In a series of 28 cases of paroxysmal tachycardia seen by me, eight gave sufficient evidence of food allergy to warrant the conclusion that the allergy played a major role in the production of the arrhythmia. Crip (personal communication) has had a similar experience. L. P. Gay<sup>32</sup> has also encountered cases of this type. The following patient, reported by me in 1932,<sup>185</sup> well illustrates the salient points.

## ILLUSTRATIVE CASES

Case 91. Miss E. S., a nurse, aged 40 years, was seen by me on December 29, 1931, in the midst of an attack of tachycardia. She had been subject to such attacks as long as she can remember, at least since the age of five. They have been characterized by sudden onset of rapid heart action, usually in relation to "indigestion." The "indigestion" was usually caused by eating nuts, which "always upset her." The attacks stop in a few minutes as suddenly as they start, usually after the use of one or another maneuver upon which experience has taught her to rely. The most effective of these has been to stand

are called for. In this same connection, attention is called to the fact that acetyl-beta-methyl-choline and related substances, which have proved effective in arresting paroxysms of tachycardia, may at times precipitate an attack of asthma in those inclined to that disease. They should therefore be used with caution in all allergies, and preferably not at all in those who are obviously asthmatic (see Case 71).

5. **AFTER COUNTLESS PAROXYSMS OF TACHYCARDIA DURING MORE THAN 40 YEARS, HER HEART CONTINUES TO BE NORMAL.** The manifestations of allergy are primarily functional and reversible. Except under extraneous unfavorable circumstances (e.g., infection in allergy of the respiratory tract), they do not lead to organic change. At this point the question could be asked: might this not be an instance in which the allergic reaction actually takes place in the heart itself? Perhaps. But the facts do not warrant the conclusion, since the same effect might have resulted through a reflex pathway from an allergic reaction elsewhere in the body. The following case reported by me in 1926<sup>156</sup> illustrates the point.

**Case 92.** A woman of 35 years of age, with no previous history of cardiac disease and no evidence of subsequent development of such disease in the eight years thereafter, was subjected to the Rubin test for patency of the fallopian tubes by the intra-uterine injection of air. A few minutes after leaving the gynecologist's office, she experienced sharp pain in the left upper abdomen with radiation to the neck. At the same time there developed a paroxysm of tachycardia.

She returned to the gynecologist's office where I saw the patient with him. The presenting features were the complaint of pain and a heart rate of 152 per minute. Reasoning that both pain and tachycardia were caused by a bubble of air under the left half of the diaphragm, we placed the patient flat on the table and elevated the foot end. Not only did the pain promptly stop, but the heart rate fell in a few seconds to 76. Some minutes later when the patient assumed the erect position, both pain and tachycardia returned, to be promptly relieved when she was again inverted. Some hours later, when the air bubble had been absorbed, she was free of symptoms.

Eighteen months later, she went through her first pregnancy without trouble and was well when last heard from in 1934.

Obviously, the paroxysm of tachycardia must have been mediated by a reflex mechanism.

When an attack of paroxysmal tachycardia lasts long enough, even though it was initiated by an allergic mechanism and in the absence of obvious cardiac disease, then the exhaustion of even a normal heart might result from the prolonged excessive effort. When a patient is seen for the first time in the latter stage, the physician may well assume the presence of serious myocardial damage and may even overlook the paroxysmal and functional nature of the underlying tachycardia. The next case illustrates this point.

**Case 93.** In December, 1926, I was called to see Mrs. M. V., age 67, in consultation with her family physician. For some years she had had "heart trouble," with increasing breathlessness, and palpitation on exertion so that her activities were more and more limited. Six weeks before my visit she had been forced to take to her bed because of dyspnea and increasing peripheral edema. Her doctor believed her to be in extremis from circulatory failure, probably based on an arteriosclerotic myocarditis. The appearance of

the patient fully justified this view: orthopnea, cyanosis, many râles at the lung bases, a swollen liver, considerable dependent edema. The heart rate was about 200. The administration of digitalis over a period of the last two months had been of no avail.

There was one item in the history, however, which in my opinion had not been given adequate consideration. The earliest evidences of heart involvement were attacks of palpitation and tachycardia, that had been occurring for at least 20 years, and long before breathlessness or any other sign of circulatory inefficiency appeared. Moreover, these attacks of tachycardia came on suddenly, independent of exertion, and they stopped as suddenly as they began. A diagnosis of paroxysmal tachycardia was therefore ventured and quinidine treatment was begun at once.

On the second day the heart rate fell suddenly to under 100, and the improvement in the clinical picture that followed was most striking. For a time short paroxysms recurred several times a day but grew less frequent as a suitable daily ration of quinidine was reached. On December 30, 1926, she was able to make a 125-mile motor trip to the home of friends in Philadelphia. The next day an electrocardiographic study in the midst of an attack was made. The cardiac rate in the upright position was 195 and in the recumbent position 185. The rhythm was regular. On the next day, January 1, 1927, the tracing showed a normal rate of 75 and a regular rhythm. Dr. Wolferth reported: "The tracings show beyond question that the tachycardia is of paroxysmal auricular form. The negative T-waves would point also to definite myocardial disease." The patient soon learned to adjust her quinidine dosage to prevent more than an occasional short attack of tachycardia.

Over four years later, on April 17, 1931, the patient having been fairly well in the interval, another electrocardiogram was made. It showed normal T-waves. At the time of writing (February, 1940) the patient continues to be remarkably well in spite of her 80 years.

**Discussion.** This patient had had asthma in childhood, ragweed hay fever every autumn for many years, a rash each time she ate strawberries and digestive upsets whenever she ate certain foods. Several members of her family had been asthmatic. The avoidance of the foods causing indigestion also greatly reduced the frequency of the paroxysms of tachycardia so that she has gone as long as six months without an attack and without taking quinidine.

## OTHER CONDITIONS

From here on it becomes difficult to enumerate additional cardiac conditions provoked by an allergic mechanism. In most of those to be mentioned in this section, the allergic mechanism has been suggested by some enthusiastic allergist, but his view has not received confirmation. The usual fallacy in the allergist's conclusion has been the assumption that because a cardiac symptom or disease became worse at the time of an allergic episode, that allergy was directly responsible for such exacerbation. The truth is that any sufficient overload, allergic or otherwise, can bring on symptoms in a diseased heart: it is the overload that is responsible, not the nature of the overload. In a few instances, an exceptional case of a condition may be on an allergic basis, whereas the overwhelming majority have no such connection. The double danger then is that the allergist, assuming too much on the basis of his few cases, makes unwarranted generalizations about the role of allergy in that condition, while

the clinician who is not sufficiently allergy-minded completely misses the occasional case caused by allergy; occasional, yet one in which treatment offers so much more than in most other kinds of heart disease.

What follows is therefore an attempt both to curb the allergist's unwarranted enthusiasm, as well as to put the general practitioner on his guard for the occasionally allergic condition.

#### PAROXYSMAL AURICULAR FIBRILLATION

Not to be confused with ordinary auricular fibrillation, this much rarer form of the arrhythmia has been attributed to various factors, including toxic states (acute infections, anesthesia, thyrotoxicosis, poisoning by carbon monoxide, alcohol, tobacco, etc.), gastro-intestinal disorders or even emotional upsets (page 394). A significant fact from the standpoint of a possible allergic mechanism is that the paroxysmal arrhythmia is at times the only abnormal cardiac finding.

#### ILLUSTRATIVE CASE

The following case is, to my knowledge, the first recorded instance of an allergic paroxysmal auricular fibrillation.

**Case 94.** Mrs. A. W., white, aged 61, has experienced characteristic attacks of palpitation for at least 25 years, and probably longer. The attacks used to come at intervals of weeks or months, beginning suddenly, lasting a matter of minutes, and stopping rather more slowly than they began. She first consulted Dr. Leaman in 1930, but never presented herself during an attack. An electrocardiogram in an interval showed a normal tracing. In 1933 she survived an attack of Type 3 lobar pneumonia, in the midst of which she had a paroxysm of fibrillation that was promptly controlled by quinidine. Following the sudden death of her mother from coronary occlusion and the prolonged illness of her husband, the patient experienced more frequent attacks that lasted up to several hours. In one of these Dr. Leaman secured an electrocardiogram that showed auricular fibrillation, yet in the subsequent interval he found a normal tracing (Fig. 144). During 1937, she had attacks at intervals of days or weeks, but was able to control them promptly with quinidine. Some of these paroxysms followed soon after a meal. In September, 1937, she was admitted to a hospital for study, but all examinations, including Roentgen investigation of gallbladder and gastro-intestinal tract, gave negative findings.

In January, 1938, Dr. Leaman referred her to me for investigation of a possible sensitivity. From the standpoint of allergy, these points were highly significant as a child she had eczema, and even recently she has had an itchy-scaly rash back of an ear. For many years she had typical and rather severe migraine. A paternal uncle and her paternal grandmother had eczema and a paternal uncle had migraine. A maternal uncle had hay fever. Skin tests showed the patient to be sensitive to a number of foods.

In the two years since she was tested, she has experienced far fewer and milder attacks, and these have usually followed a break in her diet.

#### EXTRASYSTOLES

Rowe,<sup>325</sup> Wirley,<sup>416</sup> and others have reported the occurrence of extrasystoles in allergic patients after the eating of certain foods, and their disappearance after avoidance of the specific excitant. Here again, although an allergic mechanism might be involved, it seems more likely that the arrhythmia is provoked in other ways (vagus reflex, toxic action, etc.).

At all events, only in comparatively rare instances would extrasystoles call for study along allergic lines.

### ANGINA PECTORIS

It is well known that patients with typical angina pectoris may show no evidence of organic heart disease, at least as far as electrocardiographic findings are concerned. The temptation to seek a functional cause such as allergy for such cases obviously presents itself. Wirley<sup>116</sup> has actively championed an allergic mechanism in such cases, and has even claimed that coronary occlusion may be so produced, but the evidence is not convincing. Vaughn<sup>372</sup> properly reasons that an allergic episode simply acts as an exciting factor, as might any other added burden to the circulation, in precipitating an anginal attack. In his extensive experience Vaughn has observed only three patients with angina and a co-existent sensitivity to foods, in whom avoidance of these foods resulted in some alleviation but not a cure of the angina. I have seen only one patient in whom there appeared to be a relation between angina pectoris and sensitivity.

### ILLUSTRATIVE CASE

**Case 95.** E. A., a white male, developed ragweed hay fever and seasonal asthma at the age of 12. As he grew older, the asthma became more severe and lasted a little longer each year after the end of the ragweed season. At the age of 30 he changed his occupation from chauffeur to poultry farming, with the resultant increase in his asthma. In November, 1926, when he was 33 years old, he was admitted to the University Hospital in severe asthma. He was found highly sensitive to ragweed, feathers, his own house dust and some foods. During the next six months he had frequent and severe asthma for which epinephrine and ephedrine were constantly being used. During these same months he experienced an increasing number of typical attacks of stenocardia, often occurring in close relation to an attack of asthma. Gradually, under treatment of his allergic state, his asthma improved and with it his angina cleared up. He has had no angina for 12 years, except one mild questionable episode in January, 1939. He has also been free of asthma, even at the height of the ragweed season. An electrocardiogram in 1931, three years after his angina had stopped, showed a normal tracing. All studies of heart and circulation have given consistently normal findings.

One might be tempted to reason that the same things which caused the patient's asthma were responsible for the angina, so that both diseases cleared up under the same treatment. Yet I am convinced that this was not the explanation, but rather that the asthma itself, aided and abetted by the drugs used in its relief (epinephrine, ephedrine), was the cause of the angina.

### ESSENTIAL HYPERTENSION

Essential hypertension is a relatively common condition whose etiology is as yet unknown. Allergy is even more common, so that mere chance will result in the comparatively frequent coincidence of hypertension and allergy in the same individuals. It is not surprising, then, that attempts have been made to establish an allergic etiology of the hypertension in these patients.

In 1924, Kahn<sup>178</sup> reported that in four hypertensive patients with asthma, the administration of epinephrine effected not only a relief of the asthmatic paroxysm but a substantial fall in the blood pressure. Others have reported similar observations. L. P. Gay,<sup>112</sup> Liston<sup>231</sup> and others have made more direct claims that food allergy was responsible for the hypertension and that the avoidance of the offending foods resulted in a permanent reduction of the blood pressure to normal. These claims have, however, not been substantiated. The general experience in these cases has been that the relief of the allergy has usually resulted only in inconstant and temporary lowering of the pressure, without permanently affecting the progress of the hypertension. Most allergists agree with Vaughn<sup>379</sup> when he concludes that allergy is not the basic cause of the hypertension, but may in some cases determine pressure episodes and thereby serve as an excitant factor. In the management of patients with essential hypertension, one should therefore be on the alert for allergy and deal with it appropriately as one would with any other co-existing complication that might aggravate the underlying disease (page 294).

#### THROMBOANGIITIS OBLITERANS

Harkavy et al<sup>148</sup> and Sulzberger<sup>361</sup> have presented considerable evidence to suggest that thromboangiitis obliterans is caused by sensitivity to tobacco. Harkavy<sup>147</sup> has also reported that when rats, sensitized to tobacco, were repeatedly injected with an extract of denicotinized tobacco, they developed gangrene of the toes in some of the males, but not in females. Other workers have not confirmed these findings and have challenged the conclusion that thromboangiitis obliterans is caused by tobacco sensitivity. Westcott and Wright<sup>390</sup> have marshalled considerable negative evidence. While this in no wise denies the possible role of tobacco in the etiology of thromboangiitis, an allergic mechanism must still be considered not proved.

#### PERIARTERITIS NODOSA

The possibility of an allergic etiology in some or all cases of this rare condition has been suggested by Hitchcock, Camero, and Swift<sup>189</sup> and by Cohen, Kline, and Young.<sup>61</sup> The evidence is suggestive but not as yet conclusive.

#### THE HEART AND ASTHMA

Asthma is a common disease: probably 1 per cent of all people experience it at some time in their lives. In spite of its long duration, asthma rarely kills its victims; they usually die of something else. Living, as many of them do, to a ripe old age, it becomes inevitable that asthma and cardiac disease be frequently encountered in the same patient (page 114). Occasionally the heart disease has been caused by the asthma. Much more commonly the heart disease has arisen independently and from the usual causes. In some patients the asthma is obvious, while the signs of an early

cardiac condition are overlooked. In others there is no mistaking the presence of both diseases. Then there are those in whom the cardiac failure so dominates the picture that the co-existing asthma is not recognized.

Asthma is a peculiarly serious complication for a patient with heart trouble, for reasons too obvious to mention. The recognition of the asthma in the cardiac patient is peculiarly important, because the treatment of the asthma offers so much in the way of probable help, not only for the asthma, but indirectly for the heart by reducing its load. Here, then, is a subject that should challenge the interest of every doctor who treats patients with heart disease.

### DOES ASTHMA CAUSE HEART DISEASE?

This question has given rise to more discussion among allergists than might be anticipated at first glance. The answer to the question probably depends on a number of circumstances.

Asthmatic symptoms occur in one of three ways: (1) Short, clear-cut paroxysms, lasting minutes or hours, and with symptom-free intervals whose length is determined by the time elapsing between intermittent contacts with an external cause. (2) Continuous wheezing for weeks, months or years; often mild, at times severe, and usually with slight to severe paroxysmal exacerbations. Continuous asthma may be caused by constant exposure to external causes, or to a continuation of external causes and internal causes, notably infection, with or without bacterial allergy. (3) Status asthmaticus denotes an intensely severe and prolonged attack of dyspnea lasting days or even several weeks, often with fever, usually with scanty viscid bronchial secretion that is hard to cough up and may produce bronchial obstruction, atelectasis and even fatal asphyxia.

**How Can Asthma Affect the Heart?** There is some experimental evidence that in the perfused heart of a sensitive animal there results a diminished coronary flow. Criepp<sup>75</sup> has shown that in man during an asthmatic paroxysm there are transient electrocardiographic changes that might be a result of such a reduction of blood supply. This might lead to symptoms such as premature beats or possibly even angina. Such paroxysmal asthma of itself, however, apparently does little or no permanent damage to the heart.

Continuous asthma, by reason both of its incessant annoyance and increased and continued exertion, is undoubtedly an important factor in aiding and abetting other causes of heart disease, of whatever nature they may be. It probably is also responsible for some heart disease, in that its most serious complication, emphysema, may lead to eventual myocardial trouble and failure (page 427). As yet there are not available a sufficient number of cases observed over many years to draw any statistical conclusions, although Old<sup>283</sup> and Dublin and Marks<sup>83</sup> on the basis of life insurance data find a death rate among asthmatics that is 21 to 30 per cent higher than the normal. This increased death rate is largely attributed by them to cardiac disease.



**EMPHYSEMA.** In regard to the development of serious emphysema in the course of asthma, I would like to record two clinical impressions and one note of diagnostic caution. One important factor in the etiology of emphysema in asthma appears to be an inherent quality of the pulmonary tissue, "the grade of the rubber," as Osler expressed it. Of two asthmatic patients whose diseases appear to be identical, the one may go for many years without developing emphysema, whereas the other's lungs reach an advanced degree of emphysema in a year or so. A second point that seems to be important in regard to the development of emphysema is that the shape of some chests is such that their owners have a shorter way to go than do others before their bony thorax has reached its limits of expansion. It certainly seems to me that the asthmatic who begins with a thick, stocky chest, with ribs that approach nearer to the horizontal and with a deep antero-posterior diameter, makes poorer weather of his asthma than does the asthmatic whose chest at the start is rather longer, with sloping ribs, a cross-section that is more oval than round, and consequently showing wider variations in chest capacity at the extremes of the respiratory cycle.

The diagnostic caution is this: a diagnosis of emphysema should be made only with great hesitancy during the presence of frank asthmatic symptoms. The roentgenologist is particularly prone to make this error when reading the films of an asthmatic patient, yet films made a few minutes after the asthma has been relieved by epinephrine will be reported as normal. A comparison of physical findings before and after epinephrine is always in order in such cases. Vital capacity figures are then particularly helpful.

### DIAGNOSTIC PROBLEMS

Many cases of co-existence of asthma and heart disease in the same patient present no difficulties in this regard. Pronounced asthma is easily recognized by the experienced clinician, and the same may be said for cardiac disease. There are, however, a number of situations in which diagnostic error may arise (page 115). Asthma, especially when continuous, may at times lead the clinician wrongly to diagnose a heart disease that does not exist. Again, the asthma may so dominate the picture that an associated cardiac lesion is overlooked. In yet other patients the asthma is so overshadowed by the heart trouble as to be overlooked.

### ILLUSTRATIVE CASE

Here is a case in which heart disease was wrongly suspected in a patient with severe asthma:

**Case 96.** Mrs. C. F., a white woman, 52 years old, had had asthma since the age of 11. During the last two years the asthma had been practically continuous. The least exertion caused distressing increase of dyspnea. Because of nasal obstruction due to polyps, she was brought to the office of a rhinologist. The rhinologist was so impressed by her

breathlessness on exertion and her marked cyanosis that he promptly sent her to a cardiologist. The cardiologist, on the other hand, finding no evidence of heart trouble, either clinically or by electrocardiogram, sent her to me for study of her asthma. The asthma was greatly relieved by treatment according to allergic principles, so that she proved a good subject for nasal surgery, and eventually was restored to her usual health. The cyanosis, which had so strongly suggested heart disease to the rhinologist, cleared up when she stopped taking a proprietary asthma medicine containing acetanilid.

Severe asthma may for a time mask the development of cardiac disease. This is more likely to occur in the elderly and in those with fairly continuous rather than paroxysmal asthma. In part, at least, this is a result of the masking of physical signs in the heart by the overexpanded and noisy lungs. The chance for diagnostic error will be lessened if the physician makes it customary to examine the heart at a time when epinephrine has minimized the asthma but when the pressor effects of the drug are wearing off.

Asthma is not always a clearly defined condition with obvious symptoms and findings. In its milder forms, the patient experiences nothing beyond a tendency to bouts of coughing and a slight feeling of tightness in the chest. Such symptoms may last only a few minutes after being provoked by exertion or hearty laughter. Or they may be more prolonged and are then considered as colds, to which the patient casually refers as his "cigarette cough" or his "bronchial trouble." Physical examination would disclose a few wheezy râles at the height of symptoms, but would be negative in the intervals. Neither the patient nor his physician thinks of the condition as a true allergic asthma. Yet such it is, and at any time it may assume major proportions and serious significance, especially when heart disease enters the picture. Its recognition then becomes a matter of vital importance.

### ILLUSTRATIVE CASES

Examples of this are furnished in the following abstracts of cases reported by me elsewhere.<sup>154</sup>

Case 97. C. S., a man, aged 53, was admitted to the University Hospital because of dyspnea and edema of the feet and legs. Dyspnea had begun two years before and gradually increased until he had an attack of bronchopneumonia 14 months before admission. Following this the breathlessness became much worse, at first on exertion, then without effort, especially toward nightfall. Increasing palpitation and peripheral edema caused him to consult a physician who diagnosed heart trouble and gave him digitalis. There was no personal or family history of asthma or any other allergic condition. For 16 years he had worked in a very dusty occupation; during the last three years he had been required to wear a mask.

PHYSICAL EXAMINATION showed obvious dyspnea, cyanosis, edema, advanced emphysema, a greatly enlarged heart with feeble sounds and a rapid rate, a swollen liver, and many musical wheezing râles in both lungs. The roentgenogram showed enormous enlargement of the heart and probable pneumoconiosis. The electrocardiogram gave evidence of severe myocardial trouble. There was no eosinophilia.

**Discussion.** A diagnosis of advanced emphysema, pneumoconiosis and severe myocardial disease with congestive heart failure seemed to offer an adequate explanation for this symptom picture. But the wheezy character of the râles aroused the suspicion of allergy. On being tested, he was found highly sensitive to feathers. Avoidance of feathers was followed by marked improvement for a month. Then the signs of heart failure gradually returned and the patient finally died. The wheezy râles, however, did not recur. Had the asthmatic component been recognized much sooner, it might have served to delay the eventual failure of the heart.

**Case 98.** W. P., a man of 51, had complained for two years of cough and hoarseness, later of increasing dyspnea, worse on exertion, and finally of substernal pain. Studies established a diagnosis of syphilitic aneurysm of the aorta and a paralysis of the left vocal cord. There was no history, personal or familial, of allergic disease, and the blood showed no eosinophilia. From time to time, however, there were wheezy râles in both lungs, and it became evident that his aneurysmal symptoms were worse when the wheezy râles were present. Skin tests disclosed sensitivity to feathers, wool, and horse hair. Avoidance of these substances resulted not only in disappearance of the râles but also in striking improvement of his aneurysmal symptoms and undoubtedly prolonged his life. He died nearly three years later when the aneurysm ruptured.

**Discussion.** The finding of musical râles in any patient suffering from heart disease should always raise the question of a co-existing asthma. True as it is, that not all that wheezes is asthma, the fact remains that asthma is by far the most common cause of wheezy râles.

At times the moist râles of heart failure may mask or completely replace the musical asthmatic râles. The failure to obtain positive skin tests, although in itself not an uncommon finding in asthmatics of advanced years, still further lulls to rest the clinician's suspicion of an asthmatic condition. Under these circumstances the therapeutic effect of epinephrine on the patient's breathlessness may be of diagnostic help. The following is an example:

**Case 99.** W. S., a man, aged 65, was admitted to the hospital with chief complaints of dyspnea, cough, and palpitation. For 40 years he had had a chronic cough, worse in winter. At 48 he had his first attacks of nocturnal dyspnea, which then recurred several times a year, usually after catching cold. More recently the dyspnea had become less paroxysmal, but more or less constant, and usually related to exertion or to certain cardiac phenomena. For 20 years he had had attacks of "fluttering" of the heart, with tachycardia, palpitation, precordial distress and in the last few months typical angina. For several years he had known that he had a high blood pressure. There was no family history of allergy.

**PHYSICAL EXAMINATION** showed a drowsy, orthopneic patient, cyanotic and with Cheyne-Stokes breathing. The chest was very emphysematous and there were numerous moist râles at both lung bases. The heart was definitely enlarged (transverse diameter by orthodiagram was 16.8 cm), the sounds were feeble, the rate rapid, and there were many extrasystoles. The blood pressure was elevated. The liver was felt 3 cm. below the ribs in the midclavicular line and was distinctly tender. There was no edema. The blood urea nitrogen was 42 mg. per 100 cc. The roentgenogram of the chest showed the enlarged heart and marked passive congestion of the lungs. The electrocardiogram gave evidence of severe myocardial disease. In view of the old history of asthma, skin tests were made, but with negative results. The whole picture, then, seemed to be one of

hypertensive cardiovascular disease with rather acute myocardial failure. Venesection and rapid digitalization were discussed by the house officers.

However, in view of the old asthmatic history, the attending physician suggested the repeated use of small doses of epinephrine (3 minims) as the first therapeutic measure. There resulted marked and rapid improvement in all symptoms. In five days the signs of cardiac decompensation had nearly subsided, the pulse became normal, as did the blood urea nitrogen. After four weeks he walked out of the hospital.

**Cardiac Asthma.** At this point I wish to refer briefly to the syndrome, cardiac asthma, discussed more fully elsewhere (page 301). It is applied to dyspnea that is purely of cardiac origin, is attended by rather sudden pulmonary congestion and edema, and so has a distinctly paroxysmal manner of occurrence. This condition, when produced in the manner described, is in no way related to allergic asthma. In fact, the use of the word "asthma" in this instance is unfortunate because it leads to unnecessary confusion in the minds of students. It must be remembered, however, that the word "asthma" in Greek has simply the significance of breathlessness, and is therefore practically synonymous with dyspnea. Today "asthma" is restricted to a type of dyspnea due to the bronchospasm and mucosal edema of an allergic reaction.

Paroxysmal pulmonary edema (moist, not wheezing râles) may result in occasional instances when an asthmatic with severe cardiac disease is exposed to the things to which he is sensitive. Vaughn<sup>379</sup> has directly observed two such cases, the excitants being inhaled orris root in one and ingested egg in the other. Swinesford<sup>371</sup> even suggests that a majority of cardiacs who develop cardiac asthma are allergic. In my patient, W. S., cited in case 99, the findings were consistent with a diagnosis of cardiac asthma, yet the relief obtained through epinephrine strongly suggests the allergic nature of the attack.

It would therefore be wise in every case of cardiac asthma to think routinely of the possibility of an allergic factor in its production.

### PRINCIPLES OF DIAGNOSIS

The diagnosis of asthma in cardiac patients differs in no wise from that in other individuals. The prime requisite, however, is an alertness on the part of the physician attending cardiac patients as to the possibility of asthma. Especially is such alertness called for when the cardiac phenomena completely dominate the clinical picture, as they so frequently do. It must always be remembered that probably one in every 75 individuals has or has had asthma and that one in every seven is allergic.

A detailed discussion of the diagnosis of asthma is out of place in this text. It will be well, however, to outline the principles involved.

**Evidence of Allergy.** The possibility that a patient is allergic may promptly be suggested by the fact that he has presented at some time in his life a number of symptoms that may easily be recognized as allergic. He may have had frankly paroxysmal dyspnea in attacks that occurred whenever he was exposed to certain things, and that were relieved by

epinephrine or ephedrine. Other such obviously allergic conditions include hay fever, perennial allergic rhinitis (paroxysmal excessive sneezing is as a rule allergic), urticaria, eczema, food or drug idiosyncrasy, commonly also migraine. A family history of these conditions further suggests the possibility that the patient himself may have inherited the allergic characteristics.

The important thing from the standpoint of the history is that questioning along allergic lines must invariably be a part of the routine of all history taking.

Whenever the dyspnea tends to come in paroxysms in a cardiac patient, there is an increased possibility that an allergic factor may be involved. This is even more true when the paroxysms occur independently of exertion or when they tend to recur at certain times and places.

The finding of wheezing râles in the lungs should always raise the possibility of an allergic cause in their production. This possibility becomes a decided probability if epinephrine promptly clears up such râles.

Having decided on the basis of the foregoing criteria that the patient probably has asthma as well as cardiac disease, one has made only the first step in arriving at a complete allergic diagnosis. To arrive at such a complete diagnosis requires:

(1) A searching history, that includes all details of his contacts with substances to which he might be sensitive.

(2) A physical examination which must always include an examination of the upper respiratory tract by a rhinologist, using the nasopharyngoscope and transillumination of the sinuses. In this way anatomic defects, such as a marked deflection of the nasal septum with firm septoturbinal contacts, or secondary pathologic changes, such as sinus infection and mucous polyps, will be found. In selected cases, subject of course to the limitations imposed by the cardiac disease, bronchoscopy is indicated to discover bronchiectasis or bronchostenosis.

(3) Laboratory studies, including roentgenograms, usually of the sinuses, often also of the chest, and in some instances of the bronchial tree after lipiodol instillation.

(4) Complete skin tests, by some one who knows what to test for and how to interpret the results.

(5) Treatment itself is diagnostically important, for it determines not only the significance of the results of the skin tests, but may serve to discover causes which the tests failed to find.

(6) Subsequent Studies. Such a complete diagnostic study is not necessarily the last diagnostic survey. The fundamental trouble with the allergic patient is not that he has asthma, or that he is sensitive to horse hair, but that he has inherited the ability to become sensitized to things in his environment more easily than do normal persons. Therefore, his sensitization pattern is not a fixed and static thing, but can and does change in the course of the years, old sensitivities disappearing and new ones developing. This possibility must therefore be considered when the patient suffers a relapse.

## PRINCIPLES OF TREATMENT

Here again there is no fundamental difference in the management of cardiac patients with asthma as compared with asthmatics who have no cardiac disease. There are, to be sure, occasional instances in which drug therapy of one condition needs to be modified in consideration of the other. The chief of these will be mentioned later.

I shall confine myself to a brief outline of therapeutic principles. For details as to my views on the subject the reader is referred elsewhere.<sup>187</sup>

**Allergic Factors.** The first axiom in allergy is that avoidance of that to which the patient is sensitive gives by far the best therapeutic results. But to be wholly effective, such avoidance must be complete. When complete avoidance is impossible or highly impractical (e.g., house dust or pollen), then one should strive to attain a partial avoidance as great as may be. The production of symptoms by an allergen in a sensitive patient is a quantitative matter. A very little of the allergen may cause no symptoms at all. More allergen will provoke mild symptoms and much allergen will cause serious symptoms. The more of the allergen which the patient avoids, the more likely is he to be helped by the next therapeutic measure to be applied: desensitization by injection of extracts of the things that cause his asthma. Sensitivity to pollens and to house dust most commonly calls for such injection treatment. In addition to these, orris root, feathers, hair and an occasional occupational dust may call for desensitization when unusual circumstances make their complete avoidance by the patient impossible. Food sensitivity calls for desensitization as a rule only in case of the foods hardest to avoid: egg, milk, and wheat, and then this is attempted by feeding (rather than by injection) of increasing amounts, beginning with quantities too small to produce symptoms.

**The Treatment of Complications.** This calls for some consideration of the treatment of the cardiac disease. From the standpoint of drug therapy, attention is called at this time to two things that should be remembered in the case of allergic cardiac patients. Allergic patients furnish the bulk of those who have drug idiosyncrasies. These include such drugs as quinine, quinidine, salicylates, iodides, barbiturates, and opiates. When a patient gives a clear-cut history that he is sensitive to a drug, it should never be given except under the greatest need and with the greatest precautions, lest the result prove dangerous. The second point of warning from the angle of cardiac therapy is that opiates, and especially opiates together with atropine, drugs so useful in cardiac disease, must be used with the greatest caution in patients with intense asthma and greatly reduced and very viscid sputum, that is, in status asthmaticus. Their use in status asthmaticus has been the most common cause for death in asthma.

**NASAL COMPLICATIONS** often call for surgery, provided the cardiac condition permits. There may be need for a submucous resection, the drainage of infected sinuses or the removal of nasal polyps. Such operations should

be performed under local anesthesia. They should not be done during a pollen season, lest the patient develop a new pollen sensitivity.

**THE TREATMENT OF INFECTION** in sinuses or bronchial tree requires careful and sustained treatment. In addition to surgical measures to insure drainage of sinuses, this includes the use of vaccines, autogenous or stock. Such vaccine therapy must be very cautiously used, especially from the standpoint of dosage, lest injections be followed by serious reactions in those sensitive to bacteria. Initial doses should never exceed two million organisms and may have to be much smaller. Injections are best given at intervals of not less than one week. Change of climate, especially during the winter months, is a valuable measure, when feasible.

**The Treatment of the Asthmatic Dyspnea.** The most effective drug in asthma is, of course, epinephrine. It may be given by inhalation of a vaporized 1:100 solution or the subcutaneous injection of 1:1000 solution. Here the doses should be small: 2 or 3 minims, repeated as often as needed, rather than larger doses. Epinephrine may be suspended in oil (1:500) or dissolved in gelatin that is solid at body temperature, but liquid at a slightly higher temperature. The absorption of the drug is thereby delayed and its effect greatly prolonged. In the presence of cardiac disease, however, the use of epinephrine has certain obvious limitations, even contraindications. These include coronary disease and hypertension, in which such a violently acting pressor substance should be used with extreme caution or not at all. Less effective, and also less dangerous, are ephedrine, neosynephrine and related drugs. These drugs, while less useful than epinephrine in severe asthma, are often very helpful in preventing attacks when they are routinely administered several times a day. Here again, smaller doses, e.g.,  $\frac{1}{8}$  grain to  $\frac{3}{8}$  grain of ephedrine sulphate, should be used to avoid unfavorable effects on heart and blood pressure.

**IODIDES** are of great value in cases of chronic and more or less continuous asthma. Small doses, 2 or 3 grains t.i.d., should be given by mouth and over long periods.

**ANTIPYRIN AND ACETANILIDE.** Some asthmatics have found that they get considerable relief through certain proprietary mixtures containing these two drugs. Their use in cardiac patients is to be discouraged because of the danger of methemoglobin formation and consequent impairment of respiratory function.

**NONSPECIFIC PROTEIN SHOCK THERAPY**, so useful at times in chronic asthma, is contraindicated in the presence of cardiovascular disease, notably myocardial weakness, hypertension and arteriosclerosis.

In more severe attacks, *aminophyllin*, 2 grains by mouth, or far better,  $7\frac{1}{2}$  grains in 2 cc. of solution injected intravenously, may relieve when epinephrine fails.

**IN THE MOST SEVERE ATTACKS, *status asthmaticus*,** one is dealing with a major emergency which calls for prompt and decisive action. The first indication is immediate hospitalization, if at all possible. The patient should be in a room alone, not in a ward. Bedding and all contents of the room

must be in keeping with his known allergic pattern. This must be arranged in advance. On several occasions I have saved a patient's life by taking out of his oxygen tent the feather pillow that was choking him to death.

**OXYGEN OR OXYGEN WITH HELIUM**, is the most effective means of combating the cyanosis.

**ANESTHETICS.** At times surgical anesthesia has proved life-saving. I prefer to use avertin, 60 to 80 mg. per kilo. of body weight, given in solution by bowel.

**VENESECTION** in the presence of pulmonary edema is of recognized value. One should remember the principle set forth by the old phlebotomists: that 10 ounces rapidly withdrawn was more helpful than 20 ounces removed slowly.

**Climatic Treatment.** There is no climatic treatment of asthma. There is only climatic treatment for the individual asthmatic. What may be a favorable climate for one may not prove so for another. A few guides in selecting a climate may be ventured, but without any advance guarantee of efficacy. An equable climate without severe storms is preferable for most asthmatics. The asthmatic with cardiac disease should never go to an altitude higher than 2000 feet. Those with much bronchitis and considerable sputum will be better off in the dry climate of southern Arizona or southern California. On the other hand, if the patient's sputum is scant and viscid, a moist climate and near sea level is better (Georgia, Florida, Gulf Coast). High humidity, and especially fog are badly tolerated by most asthmatics. Whenever a climate change is contemplated, care must be taken that the patient does not encounter in his new environment the things to which he is sensitive.

From what has been said, it is clear that the management of a patient with asthma and cardiac disease requires of the physician a degree of skill and judgment not exceeded in the realm of clinical medicine.



## CARDIAC PROBLEMS IN SURGICAL PRACTICE

## THE SURGICAL RISK

We have advanced considerably since the days when auscultation at the last moment in the anesthetizing room was considered sufficient to determine the risk from the cardiac standpoint. Today the functional capacity of the circulation is stressed, while the murmurs that attend valvular lesions carry far less weight in the final estimate of the patient's ability to stand the added strain of anesthetic and operation. There is also a greater realization today that the circulation is not the simple problem in hydraulics it was once believed to be and the heart is not the only motive organ.

The role of the peripheral circulation in the production of many symptoms in surgical patients that were formerly regarded as cardiac manifestations is now appreciated. A better understanding of the signs and symptoms that accompany surgical shock aids in the recognition of this condition and still further reduces the number of heart deaths reported by surgical services.

A detailed study of every aspect of the cardiac patient is an essential prelude in the assessment of the surgical risk. Here again the classification of the American Heart Association (page 59) proves most useful in assembling the essential details, for only when the cardiac diagnosis is summarized under etiology, anatomy, physiology, and functional capacity is the way paved for consideration of the problem of the surgical risk. I have found the small form shown in Table XI a handy guide in these cases. If filled out by the surgeon and internist before the consultation, it will sharply outline the situation and save considerable time.

**RESPONSE TO EXERCISE.** A knowledge of the heart's response to the exercise imposed by daily activities will aid in giving an opinion as to its probable conduct during anesthesia and operation. Many times the burden imposed by operation is far less than this accustomed load. Consequently, if the patient tells us that he has no dyspnea or chest pain on ordinary exertion, we can be reasonably sure that the functional capacity of the heart will not be dangerously taxed by the operation. The few exceptions to this rule are the usual unpredictable types: coronary disease with angina and syphilitic aortitis. Sudden death of patients in these groups may occur during surgical procedures just the same as it may occur during the ordinary activities of every day life, but fortunately this is a rare event.

**TABLE XI**  
**PRE-OPERATIVE CARDIOVASCULAR CONSULTATION SHEET**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Service of: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Surgical diagnosis: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Operation contemplated: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Past medical history (resume): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Family history of cardiac disease: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE CARDIOVASCULAR STATUS**

Symptoms

Dyspnea or chest pain (check)—  
 { On level  
 On grade  
 On stairs  
 On hurrying  
 Against the wind

Cardiac pain—  
 { Location  
 Duration  
 Radiation

Duration of above symptoms?

Are they stationary or progressive?

Is cardiac failure present?

Edema?

Its extent:

**EXAMINATION OF THE CARDIOVASCULAR SYSTEM**

General appearance.

Blood pressure: Systolic \_\_\_\_\_

Diastolic \_\_\_\_\_

Venous pressure: \_\_\_\_\_

Peripheral vessels (check): Barely palpable \_\_\_\_\_  
 Tortuous \_\_\_\_\_

Thickened \_\_\_\_\_  
 Calcified \_\_\_\_\_

Retinal vessels (if examined):

Heart:

Size (record position of apex beat if palpable):

Thrill (location and time):

Heart sounds (intensity, splitting).

The rhythms:

Murmurs (location, transmission in erect position and in recumbency):

Response to previous operations:

Response to exercise test:

Result of electrocardiographic study:

Result of chest roentgenogram or fluoroscopy:

Orthodiagram:

Cardiovascular diagnosis (A) Etiologic  
 (B) Anatomic  
 (C) Physiologic  
 (D) Functional capacity  
 Therapeutic Class

The grade of risk:

Result of operation:

Cardiovascular condition on discharge:

Cardiovascular prognosis:

Patients who have complete heart block should be judged on the basis of the myocardial reserve. Usually they cannot carry on ordinary activities of life without discomfort and are poor risks. Well-compensated rheumatic and hypertensive hearts usually stand anesthesia and operation very well. When râles are present in the lung bases or other signs of congestive failure can be demonstrated, the patient is a poor risk and should not be operated on until the congestion clears, and then only if the situation

without operation is an immediate threat to life itself. An estimation of the grade of cardiac risk based on a study of the patient's functional capacity may be obtained by the application of the data summarized in Table XII.

TABLE XII

## THE GRADE OF RISK BASED ON A STUDY OF THE FUNCTIONAL CAPACITY

|            |                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Grade I.   | Class 1 of<br>American Heart Association<br>(New classification) | Good risk. Here are included patients in whom ordinary physical activity does not cause undue fatigue, palpitation, dyspnea or chest pain, all cases of well-compensated valvular heart disease except syphilitic, hypertensive heart disease with no renal involvement.                                                                              |
| Grade II.  | Classes 2 and 3 of<br>American Heart Association                 | Risk fair with careful medical supervision and pre-operative treatment. Emergency surgery only until risk improved. Here are grouped cases of beginning congestive failure and angina. These cases all show undue fatigue, palpitation, dyspnea or chest pain on ordinary physical activity.                                                          |
| Grade III. | Class 4 of<br>American Heart Association                         | Surgery contraindicated. These patients show signs of cardiac insufficiency at rest or signs of heart infection. They cannot carry on any physical activity without discomfort. Here are included severe angina patients, cases of cardiac decompensation with edema and severe dyspnea and patients with marked reduction of the myocardial reserve. |

**Type of Surgical Procedure.** Finally, an estimation of the surgeon's ability in performing the contemplated operation and the probable duration of the procedure must be considered. Certainly the patient who is on the operating table for three hours is not as good a candidate for recovery as the patient who is back in his room in half this time following the same operation, provided an equal delicacy of tissue manipulation has been shown.

## THE VALUE OF THE ELECTROCARDIOGRAM

The electrocardiogram is rarely the sole basis for estimating the surgical risk except in the presence of unusual arrhythmias or when coronary occlusion is suspected. However, the electrocardiogram may be of indirect assistance in evaluating the cardiac prognosis which will aid in making the decision regarding operation. Many operations of convenience like herniorrhaphy and hemorrhoidectomy are not carried out in cases where the electrocardiographic findings point to a very serious lesion that is usually not compatible with more than a year or two of life. The electrocardiogram may also ease the surgeon's worries by identifying a number of cardiac arrhythmias as harmless types. THE ELECTROCARDIOGRAM IN ITSELF OFFERS NO SHORT CUT TO AN ESTIMATION OF THE SURGICAL RISK. It is only a part of the cardiac examination and should be considered with the rest of the clinical and laboratory data in making the evaluation (Table XI).

Occasionally the electrocardiogram may be a great assistance to the surgeon in differentiating coronary occlusion from acute abdominal emergencies when the pain is referred to the abdomen (page 479).

## CHOICE OF ANESTHETIC

If care is used in the choice of the anesthetic and the anesthetist, no untoward effects on the heart need be feared. Although disturbances of cardiac rhythm during induction as well as fall in the blood pressure and cyanosis are often noted, we cannot blame the heart for what is often the result of a poorly administered anesthetic. If a sudden increase in the pulse rate that attends the onset of a paroxysm of tachycardia occurs during anesthesia, this should not be a cause for alarm if dyspnea and venous stasis are absent. Vagus pressure often stops the attack, and it is rarely necessary to resort to emergency measures (page 383).

Electrocardiographic studies made during operation on 109 patients by Kurtz and his coworkers<sup>171</sup> showed marked changes in the rhythm. Sinus arrhythmia, extrasystoles, downward displacement of the pacemaker were the most common alterations, although paroxysmal auricular fibrillation and heart block were recorded in rare instances. Chloroform was found to produce the greatest number of irregularities and procaine the least. The association of chloroform with instances of ventricular fibrillation has likewise seemed to decrease the frequency of its use in modern surgical practice.

Care should be exercised in the use of epinephrine combined with the various preparations used in local anesthesia in patients with coronary disease and angina, since instances of coronary occlusion following operation have been traced to this source. Epinephrine may also provoke ventricular fibrillation in susceptible cases if not used cautiously.

Nitrous oxide-oxygen, if skillfully given, is satisfactory for cardiac patients. However, if the situation is not in the hands of a well-trained anesthetist, ether, using the open drop method, is safer.

## CARDIAC ARREST DURING ANESTHESIA

The sudden stoppage of a normal heart during the administration of an anesthetic is an emergency that has a happy ending in few instances. Considering the advances made in the experimental laboratory and the recent successful defibrillation of the human ventricles by Beck,<sup>25</sup> prompt action by previously trained resuscitation squads should bring success in a much higher percentage of cases.

Ventricular fibrillation and cardiac standstill are the terminal mechanisms that must be combated. In 1850, Hoffa and Ludwig first showed that electrical stimulation of the mammalian heart produced ventricular fibrillation and death. Provost and Battelli, in 1899, succeeded in applying a countershock directly to the fibrillating heart by placing electrodes on its surface and bringing about complete standstill. Hosker, Kouwenhoven, and Langworthy, in 1933, demonstrated that adrenalin and calcium chloride after the countershock and standstill restored the normal beat. Wiggers used massage before applying the countershock

and has been successful in re-establishing normal rhythm in dogs with fibrillating ventricles.

Mautz emphasizes the importance of adequate pulmonary ventilation while attempts are being made to revive the fibrillating ventricles. A supply of oxygen can be delivered to the lungs by the use of a face mask or an intratracheal tube. Direct massage of the heart moves the oxygen from the lungs to the brain tissues where the lack of oxygen produces irreparable damage in three to five minutes. A chest incision with removal of one or two cartilages should be quickly done and the heart grasped in the hand. In this manner the heart may be emptied and circulation continued.

The process of defibrillation should next be attempted. Mautz, working in Beck's laboratory, has demonstrated that procaine hydrochloride is useful in the defibrillation process by reducing the irritability of the heart. Two cc. of a 5 per cent solution are injected into the right ventricular cavity. Massage of the heart forces the drug into the coronary circulation, and the cardiac tone is quickly reduced. When an electric current of 1.0 to 1.5 amperes is then sent through the heart by placing two electrodes directly on its surface, the fibrillation is usually replaced by standstill. At this stage 1 cc. of a 1 to 1000 solution of epinephrine hydrochloride well diluted and added to a 5 per cent solution of calcium chloride is injected into the right ventricle, and massage continued. Co-ordinated contractions of the heart are now initiated in many cases, although small subsequent doses of epinephrine may be necessary. To guard against dilatation the heart should be carefully watched for 20 minutes before the chest is closed. A team possessing the knowledge of the essential apparatus and the technic to employ in using the drugs that have been recommended by Beck and his associates in the defibrillation of the human ventricles should be available to every surgical service.

**Other Procedures.** In the absence of the team and equipment necessary to defibrillate the ventricles, either of two procedures may be employed. The heart may be massaged through the diaphragm, and in this manner a flow of blood to vital cerebral centers maintained, or intracardiac injections may be used. The combination of these two methods is more apt to be successful, but the results will not equal application of the more accurate measures outlined above.

**Drugs.** Any of the numerous drugs that have been recommended for cardiac injection may suffice in cases of standstill if they are capable of producing an irritable ectopic focus at the site of injection.<sup>168</sup> In the first stage of anoxemia there is a failure of impulse formation at the S-A node. The piercing of the heart muscle itself is a stimulation and is followed by a cardiac contraction and the re-establishment of normal rhythm. In a later stage of anoxemia, when the heart muscle is pierced by the needle, it sends out a series of stimuli causing a paroxysm of tachycardia, which is of the ventricular type if the muscle of the ventricle is pierced, or a paroxysm of auricular flutter if an auricular area is injected. Hyman<sup>169, 170</sup> points out that the important difference between these mechanisms in the second

stage of anoxemia is that paroxysms of ventricular tachycardia or flutter nearly always end in fibrillation and death, while paroxysms of auricular flutter lend themselves to treatment. CONSEQUENTLY, IT IS FAR BETTER TO INJECT THE AURICLES IN AN EMERGENCY. The right auricle is preferable and is just as accessible as the ventricular site. The right auricle is entered by inserting the needle in either the third or fourth intercostal space just to the right of the sternum.

### CAN THE SURGICAL RISK BE IMPROVED?

Co-operation of the surgeon and internist makes possible the improvement in the risk by proper pre-operative treatment in many cases. Early congestive failure calls for delay in operation until it is controlled by the usual measures of rest and digitalis. Recent studies also show the practical importance of biochemical considerations in improving the surgical risk. Hypochloremia, hypoproteinemia, as well as vitamin-B deficiency (Chapter 21) influence edema in these patients and may increase the hazard of operation regardless of the technical skill of the operator. The same rule applies to the delivery of patients in obstetric practice.

Pre-operative digitalization is indicated only in the presence of congestive failure or auricular fibrillation. Some surgeons still prescribe digitalis routinely before operation in all cardiac cases even though the patient shows no circulatory symptoms in carrying out the ordinary activities of life. If this evidence of good circulation is present, how can it be further improved by the use of digitalis? The belief still exists that digitalis is useful in sustaining blood pressure and in increasing "myocardial tone." This it does not do, neither does it prevent hypostatic pneumonia in old people following operation. On the other hand, there is evidence that digitalis administered routinely before operation in the absence of cardiac failure may contribute to a fatal cardiac accident (page 86).

### POSTOPERATIVE CARDIAC ACCIDENTS

In patients who have cardiac disease of the coronary type with angina, the possibility of an accident under the surgeon's care is the same as it is in the medical ward. However, if convalescence from operation is complicated by sepsis or pneumonia, these factors may precipitate an occlusion. When surgery is imperative in the midst of an attack of coronary thrombosis, which is fortunately rare, the mortality rate will be high. Sudden death following major surgery in patients who have syphilitic aortitis cannot be prevented.

Another cause of death during the postoperative period is congestive failure. Embolic and cerebral accidents occur more frequently in these patients with impaired circulation. As a general rule, all cardiac cases react badly in the presence of postoperative infection or pneumonia. Congestive failure can be made an insignificant cause of postoperative deaths only when recognized and promptly treated before operation.

## CIRCULATORY PROBLEMS OF SURGICAL IMPORTANCE IN THE DIAGNOSIS OF ABDOMINAL LESIONS

Abdominal symptoms may be produced by almost any of the etiologic types of heart disease previously discussed (Table XIII). The mechanism of the production of the symptoms, however, is variable. For example, the failure of the heart as a pump, causing congestion of the abdominal organs, is usually first reflected in enlargement of the liver. Rheumatic heart disease with mitral stenosis is present in over 50 per cent of these cases, although hypertensive or arteriosclerotic heart disease may be the cause. Cardiac failure may produce the symptoms usually encountered in gastrointestinal-tract disease—gas, anorexia, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, fulness

TABLE XIII

## CLASSIFICATION OF CIRCULATORY DISTURBANCES OCCASIONALLY PRODUCING ACUTE ABDOMINAL SYMPTOMS

- (1) Cardiac Failure
  - (A) Congestive Type
    - Liver Enlargement (right upper quadrant pain).
    - G.-I. Tract Congestion (nausea, vomiting, gas, hemorrhage, etc.).
  - (B) Coronary Type (reflex).
    - Angina (pain referred to upper abdomen).
    - Coronary Occlusion (similar mechanism).
- (2) Pericarditis
  - (A) Acute Pericarditis (pain at times referred to abdomen).
  - (B) Calcific Pericarditis (cardiac compression). Ascites may be an early symptom.
- (3) Embolism and Thrombosis
  - (A) Mitral Stenosis (auricular fibrillation). Emboli from large left auricle to splenic, renal, superior and inferior mesenteric arteries, and to bifurcation of aorta and iliaes.
  - (B) Subacute Bacterial Endocarditis. Infected emboli from left side of the heart. Same locations as above.
- (4) Organic Vascular Changes
  - (A) Aortic Aneurysm
    - (a) Symptoms produced by tumor growth. Displacement of organs. Vertebral erosion.
    - (b) Symptoms produced by rupture or dissection.
  - (B) Arteriosclerosis. Spasm (abdominal angina). Hemorrhage (in hypertension). Thrombosis.
  - (C) Periarteritis nodosa.

and pain in the abdomen, and loss of weight. Mild, yet clinically detectable, degrees of jaundice may be added to the symptom of right upper quadrant pain caused by sudden distention of the liver capsule, completing the masquerade.<sup>324</sup> Ascitic fluid in small amounts may arise further to complicate the picture. In some cases if constipation is present with the congestive failure, this distention of the colon may reflexly inhibit the flow of bile from the liver as well as cause hypertonicity of the sphincter of Oddi. Biliary dyskinesia follows.<sup>134</sup>

Compression of the heart in calcific pericarditis by the decrease in dias-

tolic filling may produce signs of venous engorgement, and the large liver and ascites may first attract attention to the condition (page 181).

**Embolism.** In certain types of heart disease, embolism is a frequent mode of production of confusing abdominal symptoms. Again, patients with mitral stenosis and enlargement of the left auricle constitute the majority of this group. Subacute bacterial endocarditis, with its tendency to involvement of the left side of the heart, is likewise a dangerous threat to the integrity of the arterial circulation below the diaphragm. Emboli in vessels supplying the abdominal organs may be responsible for the sudden onset of symptoms simulating a variety of surgical lesions. Occlusion of the mesenteric vessels presents a picture often diagnosed intestinal obstruction, while a diagnosis of renal calculus may be made when an embolus lodges in the kidney.

Referred pain from coronary-artery disease with angina, or more frequently occlusion, may simulate any type of gastro-intestinal tract disturbance. The abdominal reference of pain in cases of angina and occlusion, and infrequently in cases of acute pericarditis, may simulate gall-bladder disease, ulcer or acute pancreatitis. Similarly, reflexes from these organs may at times produce changes in the cardiac rhythm and even in the form of the electrocardiogram. Recent experiments upon dogs by Owen<sup>70</sup> and Crittenden and Ivy<sup>71</sup> have served to prove that this mechanism is more than a mere possibility. Stimulation of the vagus nerve by disturbances in the gallbladder is no doubt the fundamental cause.

Palpable abdominal masses caused by aneurysmal dilatations of the abdominal aorta, particularly when they occur in women, are puzzling to the surgeon. Rupture or dissection of the aneurysm produces an acute picture rarely correctly diagnosed and often leading to an unnecessary celiotomy. Smaller hemorrhages, although productive of the same degree of confusion, may occur in abdominal organs in hypertension. Arteriosclerosis of the abdominal vessels may lead to thrombosis, and the clinical picture will depend upon the size and location of the vessels involved. Reduction of the blood supply in the absence of thrombotic occlusion may give rise to abdominal symptoms that have been grouped under the clinical heading of abdominal angina. Lack of proper blood supply (ischemia) when the demand on the gastro-intestinal tract is greatest (after meals) produces pain.

## ILLUSTRATIVE CASES

### CORONARY HEART DISEASE COMPLICATED BY ACUTE CORONARY OCCLUSION WITH ABDOMINAL REFERENCE OF PAIN

**Case 100.** Mr. J. M., a mechanic, age 50, was admitted to the College Hospital July 6, 1933 with chief complaint of sudden, severe epigastric pain coming on while at work. He gave a history of two years' treatment for gastric ulcer. No roentgen-ray study, however, had been made.

**PHYSICAL EXAMINATION.** The patient showed marked pallor and was sweating profusely.



fusely. Pulse 100, temperature 97° F., and respiratory rate 30. The heart was not enlarged. B. P. 110/70. There was upper abdominal tenderness but no rigidity.

LABORATORY DATA. W. B. C. 12,000. The first electrocardiogram was negative. A second electrocardiogram taken a few hours later showed characteristic T-wave changes of coronary occlusion.

**Discussion.** The previous digestive tract disturbances complained of by this patient were, no doubt, secondary to the coronary lesion. He suffered from a vague type of "indigestion" for some years, and although he was never fully studied to prove the diagnosis of peptic ulcer, it was assumed that this lesion was present because of the favorable effect of alkali therapy. The history of this form of treatment centered the attention of the receiving ward physician on the gastro-intestinal tract; the diagnosis of ruptured peptic ulcer was made, and the patient was placed on a surgical service. It is a matter of additional interest in this case that the usual leads of the first electrocardiogram were entirely negative, and the typical electrocardiographic pattern did not appear until 18 hours after the onset of the attack. At the same time a friction rub was heard over the precordium, clinching the diagnosis. It appears that the dangerous period for these cases in which there is abdominal reference of pain is the silent interval between the onset of the attack and the development of the typical electrocardiographic signs.

#### CORONARY SCLEROSIS FOLLOWED BY ACUTE CORONARY OCCLUSION DIAGNOSED GALLBLADDER DISEASE

**Case 101.** N. M., a male clerk of 51, when first examined complained of indigestion, gas, and occasional pain in the upper abdomen. Dyspnea and palpitation had been present for years. No edema or chest pain. The significant findings were obesity, slight increase in blood pressure (164/94), occasional premature beats, but not much increase in heart size. The electrocardiogram (Fig. 154 A) showed only a left axis deviation. The patient was placed on a dietary regime and told to make arrangements for a gallbladder roentgenologic study. This he failed to do, and when next seen, 15 months later, he showed no improvement. The indigestion was worse, the dyspnea was increasing, and he stated that a week before the second examination he had experienced a very severe attack of indigestion. This attack came on at night, awakened him from his sleep, and required a hypodermic injection of morphine for relief. Another electrocardiogram (Fig. 154 B) showed the presence of a recent coronary occlusion of the posterior type.

**Discussion.** Many times, in patients of this age and build, gallbladder disease and coronary disease coexist. This association has led to a great deal of discussion and much speculation in the literature. The exact relationship between a diseased gallbladder and the heart remains a complex subject, although electrocardiographic evidence of improvement has been observed to follow cholecystectomy, as will be shown presently. Many investigators have also demonstrated the existence of important reflex pathways between the gallbladder and the heart. Even effects upon the cardiac rate and rhythm have been shown to occur at the time of operation. It has been my impression in a number of cases where striking postoperative improvement in the pain has been observed, that the initial opinion as to the degree

of coronary involvement was incorrect. In other words, most of the symptoms were produced by disease in a high-lying gallbladder.

If this is true, our chief concern, therefore, lies in the correct identification of the major lesion. The pain of acute coronary occlusion is often confused with the pain produced by gallstones, and a celiotomy performed.<sup>210, 211</sup> Pain, vomiting, fever, leukocytosis are commonly met with in both conditions. However, if the past history is carefully reviewed, the patient with gallbladder disease will usually show a history of indigestion, while the

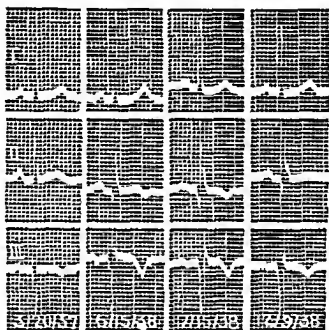


FIG. 154. The electrocardiogram, 3/20/37 shows left axis deviation. 6/15/38 shows deep Q-3 and domed RS-T intervals in leads 2 and 3 (posterior coronary occlusion). The subsequent studies show a return of tracing toward normal. Q-2 and Q-3 persist.

patient with coronary occlusion may give a history of mild attacks of angina on effort. A complete cardiac study, using the form suggested (see Table XI) will seldom fail to throw light on the correct diagnosis. The degree of shock usually observed in coronary occlusion is not present in gallbladder disease nor is the sharp drop in the blood pressure so constant in gallbladder colic as it is in coronary occlusion. The appearance of a friction rub over the precordium clinches the diagnosis in favor of anterior occlusion, while the appearance of jaundice swings the balance toward gallbladder disease.

Cholelithiasis may cause certain changes in the rhythm of the heart reflexly through the autonomic nervous system. Inhibition of the heart can also be caused by stimulation of the filaments of the vagus arising from the wall of the gallbladder. Heart block, relieved by atropine, has been reported

to result from gallbladder stimulation. The jaundice produced in some patients by gallbladder disease may affect the cardiac mechanism in some instances.

**BILIARY TRACT DISEASE AND CORONARY DISEASE—MARKED IMPROVEMENT IN CARDIAC STATUS FOLLOWING CHOLECYSTECTOMY. (DR. I. S. RAVDIN)**

**Case 102.\*** H. B., male, age 45 when first examined on 4/1/35 gave a history of several attacks of typical biliary colic over a period of 18 months. For approximately three years before admission there was in addition a history of dyspnea and a sense of substernal oppression following moderate exertion. A roentgen study revealed the presence of gall stones, and the electrocardiogram showed a flat T-wave in lead 1 (Fig. 155 A). A cholecystectomy was performed on 6/15/35. Convalescence was smooth and uneventful. Eight months later the patient reported that he was in an excellent state of health. Both cardiac and biliary tract symptoms had entirely disappeared. This improvement was reflected in the electrocardiogram taken at this time, which showed an upright T-wave in lead 1 (Fig. 155 B).

**Case 103.** Mrs. B. S., an American housewife of 56 was well until nine months before admission. At this time she had her first attack of epigastric and substernal pain. A diagnosis of calculous cholecystitis was made and during the next six months she had a good deal of distention, flatulence, and heartburn. At the end of this period there occurred another severe attack of epigastric pain, again followed by several months of marked indigestion. The patient lost 20 pounds in weight and could only be kept comfortable on a liquid diet. Cholecystogram revealed abnormal function with multiple stones in the gallbladder. An electrocardiogram (Fig. 156 A) made on 3/1/36 showed slurring of the QRS complex and inversion of the T-waves in leads 2 and 3, which was interpreted as evidence of myocardial damage. Cholecystectomy was performed the next day. Convalescence was entirely uneventful. On 5/3/36 a follow-up examination revealed that the patient was in excellent condition with no recurrence of any of the pre-operative symptoms. An electrocardiogram showed an essentially normal picture (Fig. 156 B).

**Discussion.** In 1908, Babcock called attention to the frequency of co-existing cardiac disease and biliary tract disease, and three years later this association was further elaborated by Riesman. It was the opinion of Babcock and Riesman that the cardiac disease was due to myocardial changes brought about by primary infection in the gallbladder wall. In 1931, Schwartz and Hermann called attention to the fact that obesity was frequently associated with biliary-tract disease and that the cardiac abnormalities might be due simply to the myocardial changes that accompany this condition. More recently it has been suggested that certain of the disturbances in cardiac rhythm in patients with gall-stone disease may be purely reflex in character from this focus.

The frequency with which improvement in the patients' cardiac function has been observed after cholecystectomy for gall-stone disease; the disappearance of various types of arrhythmias, the improvement in the associated anginal syndrome, and the return to normal of the electrocardiogram after competent biliary tract surgery has convinced many clinicians that

\* Cases 102 and 103 presented and discussed by Dr. I. S. Ravdin, Professor of Research Surgery, University of Pennsylvania.

gall-stone disease at least adds an additional load to an already handicapped heart.

Fitz-Hugh and Wolferth<sup>102</sup> several years ago called attention to the fact that patients with gall-stone disease who exhibited cardiac symptoms,

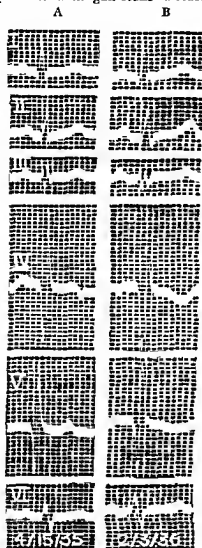


FIG. 155

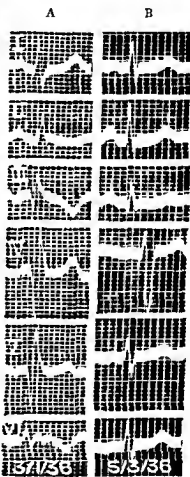


FIG. 156

FIG. 155. The electrocardiogram before and after cholecystectomy. Note increase in amplitude of  $T_1$  and return to normal of the T-waves in leads 4 and 5. (Old direct leads)

FIG. 156. The electrocardiogram before and after cholecystectomy. A change is seen in  $T_2$  and  $T_3$  of the indirect leads.

often of the anginal type, were greatly benefited following the removal of gall stones from the gallbladder or common duct. The patients they reported were found to have abnormal electrocardiographic tracings, chiefly

flat or inverted T-waves in the first two leads. Not only were the patients relieved of their biliary-tract symptoms, but these observers found that the electrocardiographic changes were reversible within a short period after the biliary-tract operation. These studies point to a toxic effect of the diseased gallbladder on the myocardium.

It should also be remembered that gall stone disease may coexist with coronary disease in patients who have had one or more acute occlusions. In a group that now numbers 68 patients who were found, following complete studies, to have evidences of moderate or severe myocardial disease, we have been impressed with the improvement in the cardiac status following the eradication of gall-stone disease. It may be that the chronic gastric distention and interference with gastro-intestinal motility which so many of the biliary tract patients show plays a part in accentuating the pre-existing cardiac abnormality. It has been our experience that patients with gall-stone disease, who also have heart disease, need not be denied operation. In the group of 68 patients referred to above where operations were performed for simple gall-stone disease or for a stone in the common duct, or both, there have been but three deaths.

### ILLUSTRATIVE CASES

#### ABDOMINAL AORTIC ANEURYSM OF ARTERIOSCLEROTIC ORIGIN SIMULATING ACUTE SURGICAL ABDOMEN AT TIME OF DISSECTION PRIOR TO FINAL RUPTURE

**Case 104.** F. E., male, age 68, had been healthy, except for occasional attacks of indigestion, until the sudden onset of a tearing pain in the upper abdomen with radiation to the right lumbar region. It was accompanied by sweating, pallor, and vomiting, and when the patient attempted to go to the bathroom, the slight exertion caused him to fall to the floor in collapse. There was involuntary emptying of the bladder and bowel. When first seen, he was pulseless with rapid shallow respirations. The picture was one of impending dissolution. The abdomen showed board-like rigidity and the temperature by rectum was 95° F. In 20 minutes, the patient regained consciousness and the pulse became perceptible at the wrist. A diagnosis of perforated peptic ulcer was made and operation advised. Further observations, however, changed this diagnosis when the board-like rigidity of the abdomen disappeared. A mass, thought to be an aneurysmal sac, was palpated. On large doses of morphine and shock treatment there was rapid improvement in blood pressure, color, and pulse volume for 36 hours. At the end of this time, there was a recurrence of severe abdominal pain, again accompanied by signs and symptoms of profound shock. Board-like abdominal rigidity did not reappear, and the aneurysmal sac was distinctly felt. It was more tender and larger in size and there was a bulging in the right flank. The patient showed increasing pallor and died in coma two hours later.

**AUTOPSY** showed no peptic ulcer, but advanced atherosclerosis of the aorta, an abdominal aortic aneurysm with rupture. The entire right side of the abdomen from the spinal column to the lateral wall and from the liver to the pelvis was filled with massive retroperitoneal clot that pushed the posterior peritoneum so far forward that it was nearly in contact with that of the abdominal wall. The hemorrhage had pushed into and split the mesentery of the cecum and ascending colon. The mesentery of the small bowel was not affected. The kidney, ureter, adrenal gland and other retroperitoneal structures floated in the enormous clot.

**RETROPERITONEAL SPACE AND STRUCTURES.** The aortic wall was thin and inelastic, and the intima was pitted and cracked with atheromatous ulcers. Just distal to the origin of the superior mesenteric artery, extending to and involving the bifurcation, was a large, fusiform dilatation which projected forward and to the left into the abdomen. After removal this measured  $14 \times 8 \times 6$  cm. The root of the mesentery lay across its anterior surface. When opened, the forward bulging portion was found to be filled with layers of dense yellow fibrin. The wall was continuous with that of the aorta, overlaid and reinforced by peritoneum and its connective tissue, to which it was closely adherent. The lumen of the vessel, which went through the mass against the posterior wall, was lined by a smooth, red layer of fresh thrombus. In the central portion of this thrombus was a small fissure which overlaid a short (1 cm.) irregular rupture in the posterior wall of the aorta.

**Discussion.** Abdominal aortic aneurysm is a rare yet important consideration in the differential diagnosis of the acute surgical abdomen. Symptoms arising from its rupture or dissection often confuse the surgeon in the diagnosis of abdominal emergencies, puzzle the urologist, when small hemorrhages invade the tissues about the kidney or press on the ureter, and frequently tax the diagnostic acumen of both internist and neurologist in interpreting pain referred to various sections of the body.

It is surprising how large these aneurysms may become and how great a displacement of the abdominal organs they may cause and still elude clinical detection if the sac points posteriorly and does not erode the vertebrae. Thompson reported an abdominal aneurysm, in a laborer, age 39, which contained six and one-half quarts of fluid blood and clots at autopsy. The aneurysm had pushed both kidneys so far forward that they were diagnosed as metastatic masses on palpation. This patient had not consulted a physician until the last few weeks of life. Many cases reported in the literature were not seen until they had become moribund following perforation or dissection. When subjective symptoms from these cases are tabulated, the most frequently recorded is pain. It may be of any variety from a vague type of abdominal discomfort, occurring at times in patients before rupture, to the typical, agonizing terminal variety attending the tearing of the aortic wall. The type of pain experienced by the patient in these vascular accidents is outstanding. Extremely large doses of morphine seem ineffective in such calamities, and this alone should suggest an abdominal vascular complication. The ensuing symptoms of profound shock add further evidence. Many times, in the cases reported in the literature, preliminary smaller ruptures may precede the final event. The intermittent hemorrhages confuse the picture, and often unnecessary surgical exploration is undertaken. The distribution and character of the pain at the time of rupture depend on the location of the aneurysm and the point of rupture. Extravasations into the retroperitoneal space are frequent. If either kidney or the ureter is involved, renal colic is simulated, and the pain may radiate down the inner aspect of the thigh to the testicle. The high site of the rupture, as in this case, often leads to the diagnosis of perforated peptic ulcer. Vomiting and diarrhea are frequently present and serve further to complicate the picture.

Figure 157, compiled from cases reported in the literature, shows the variety of symptoms that may result from rupture, pressure, or dissec-

tion when various structures of the body are involved: (1) retroperitoneal rupture with perinephric collection simulating abscess; (2) pressure on ureter with picture of uremia; (3) rupture into the gastro-intestinal tract (duodenum)—pressure on duodenum gives symptoms of pyloric obstruction; (4) rupture into the peritoneal cavity; (5) rupture simulating psoas abscess; (6) dissection with pressure on iliac arteries followed by gangrene; (7) rupture through the diaphragm into the pleural cavity with symptoms of thoracic disease; (8) spinal erosion with pain

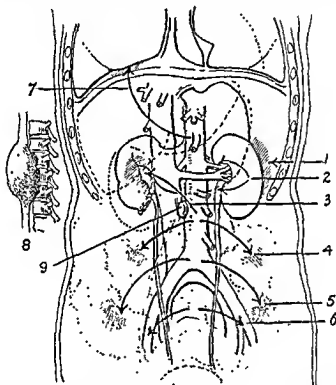


FIG. 157. Diagram illustrating organs involved and pathways of dissection in reported cases of ruptured abdominal aortic aneurysm. (From *New Intern Clin*, 1:173, 1939.)

in the back and legs; and (9) rupture into the inferior vena cava (arterio-venous aneurysm). Consequently abdominal aneurysms may produce melena, hemoptysis or hematemesis. Portal-, splenic- or mesenteric-vein thrombosis may occur and give the first clue to the presence of an aneurysm.

The clinical diagnosis of abdominal aortic aneurysm rests upon the demonstration of a pulsating, expansile tumor mass. This sign was present at the time of the second examination of Case 104. Inspection then showed a very slight anterior bulge of the abdominal wall, but no pulsations could be seen. At times a thrill may be palpable over the suspected mass. Palpation, carefully carried out, usually clinches the diagnosis. The tumor mass, when grasped, shows expansile pulsations as well as upward thrust,

and it will seldom be found to move with respirations. If the aneurysm is high up under the diaphragm, or if it points posteriorly, palpation of the sac may be difficult or impossible. Often, on auscultation, a systolic murmur is heard over the sac. In some instances, the patient presents himself with the chief complaint of pulsating abdominal mass (described by one patient as an "extra heart"). The pulsating aneurysmal sac must be differentiated from the throbbing abdominal aorta and from tumor masses overlying and transmitting pulsations of the aorta. In patients where the thickness of the abdominal fat is not too great and the musculature not too rigid, differentiation of an aortic aneurysm from a visceral tumor may readily be made if the patient assumes the knee-chest position, when the tumor will fall away from the aorta and no longer transmit a pulsation to the examining hand.

It is well to remember before making the diagnosis of abdominal aortic aneurysm that a marked pulsation of the aorta is met in cases of extreme anemia, in patients with aortic insufficiency, in *hyperthyroidism* and in many underweight, neurotic individuals. In these cases it may be possible to grasp the vessel in the hand, in which event the diagnosis of aneurysm is often made. More detailed examination, however, will always show that only an up-and-down throbbing is present and no lateral expansile pulsation. If the aneurysm is completely filled with clotted blood, it may closely simulate a tumor mass, and in these cases roentgenologic examination is invaluable. Many times roentgenograms will reveal a pressure erosion in the vertebral column between the eleventh dorsal and third lumbar segments and avoid an unnecessary laminectomy.

We have encountered abdominal aneurysms three times, proving the diagnosis in each instance, in 4,058 patients referred to the Cardiac Clinic of the Woman's College Hospital during the past ten years. All were encountered in men past 60 years of age, and all were of the arteriosclerotic type.

For additional cases illustrating the production of abdominal symptoms by other types of circulatory disease, see Cases 22 and 26.

## TRAUMA AND THE HEART

The effect of trauma on the cardiac structure and function remains a matter of much uncertainty. The testimony usually heard in courts of law reflects a wide range of beliefs among physicians and shows the need of further investigations of these important problems.

Penetrating wounds of the chest may involve the heart, in which event the mortality rate will be high but not always 100 per cent, as is the popular belief. Nonpenetrating wounds are quite as capable of causing serious cardiac injury, and death may follow a blow that leaves no external mark on the chest as evidence. The sudden strain of lifting may at times produce cardiac injury. Finally, and by no means the least important of all, the accident may initiate in a patient of the proper pattern



a train of symptoms of psychoneurotic nature that will center about the cardiac mechanism and greatly complicate the situation.

**Importance of Cardiac Records.** A complete cardiac study should be made in each case whenever cardiac injury is suspected even though a psychoneurotic factor may be evident from the start. These records will at least give the examiner something to work on. All the abnormalities in the electrocardiogram and the roentgenogram should be studied and carefully listed. Of course, the question always arises in court as to the presence before the accident of the changes described. It is quite possible for heart disease to be present in some patients who may have had no symptoms related to the circulatory apparatus and no antecedent history of disease likely to produce cardiac damage. While the increasing efficiency of the medical supervision of all industrial workers, particularly those engaged in the dangerous occupations, many times affords the opportunity for this comparison, yet in the great majority of instances when the question arises as to the origin of some defect of structure or function, previous studies are not available. Physicians in private practice usually keep poor records, and this occasionally deprives a patient who has been in an accident of the opportunity of receiving a just decision when the claim for damages is based on cardiac trauma. It is also possible in cases where the heart has been damaged before the accident that a greater degree of traumatic injury may result. Records showing the previous cardiac status give an opportunity for comparison, especially in cases where an electrocardiogram and orthodiagram have been made before the accident, and an excellent chance for evaluation of post-traumatic symptoms and signs.

When we consider the difficulties that surround the study of many other organs of the body, we must confess that cardiac examination is easy. The heart can be viewed by means of the fluoroscope against the clear pulmonary background, and its mechanisms can be studied accurately by the electrocardiograph. Consequently, if we always consider the possibility of cardiac lesions following trauma of any type and carefully record all departures from normal, the nature and extent of these lesions in time will be much better understood.

**Relation to Pre-Existing Disease.** *Trauma may accentuate any type of pre-existing cardiac disease.* For example, slight degrees of trauma may be sufficient in cases of coronary arteriosclerosis complicated by occlusion and infarction to cause rupture of the heart. It is entirely possible for trauma to be a factor in precipitating attacks of congestive failure in a patient with a delicately balanced circulation. Anginal seizures may be brought on in one already subject to them by the nervous upset that accompanies an accident, and this attack may be the one that results fatally. Among workmen who hold dangerous jobs the sudden onset of angina, paroxysmal disorders of rhythm or attacks of cardiac syncope may cause fatal accidents. There is much disagreement concerning the likelihood of trauma predisposing to an attack of acute

rheumatic fever or to a blood stream invasion by an organism like the *Streptococcus viridans* with the production of subacute bacterial endocarditis. However, we cannot deny the fact that, in a patient who has subacute bacterial endocarditis, even moderate trauma may cause the rupture of a previously damaged heart valve.

#### PENETRATING WOUNDS

The most common form of cardiac trauma is that produced by knives, bullets, or fragments from fractured ribs or sternum. These cases are surgical, if they survive long enough to be brought to the hospital. While many penetrating wounds are immediately fatal, a small percentage of cases may be saved by prompt recognition and suture. Since no time can be lost when the emergency arises, every surgical service should have established rules for diagnosis and treatment of these injuries. Elkin<sup>91</sup> states that approximately 2 per cent of the penetrating wounds of the chest involve the heart. If all cases were considered, the figure would, no doubt, be higher, since this statement is based on cases that survived long enough to reach the hospital. In Elkin's series of 22 cases, wounds of the heart were produced either with a knife (15 cases) or ice pick (seven cases). Bullet and gunshot wounds are rarely met in hospital practice since death from hemorrhage usually takes place before emergency measures can be applied.

#### SYMPTOMS

The patient who has just received a stab wound of the heart usually is unconscious when first seen. In some instances delirium may be present. The skin is cold, the lips show a pallid cyanosis, the heart sounds are weak and distant, and the pulse is usually absent. These symptoms are caused by loss of blood and beginning tamponade of the heart. Free bleeding into the pericardial sac follows the wound in the heart wall. When a sufficient quantity of blood collects, cardiac action is embarrassed, diastolic relaxation is incomplete, and the venae cavae are unable to empty completely into the right auricle. Consequently an increase in the venous pressure takes place, which is evident clinically in the distended condition of the veins of the neck and the cyanosis of lips and tongue. As the venous pressure increases, the arterial pressure drops, and usually blood pressure readings are soon unobtainable. If a portable bedside fluoroscope is handy, increase in heart size may be seen with an absence of normal pulsations along the cardiac border produced by the accumulation of blood in the pericardial sac. If these symptoms of tamponade are demonstrable following a stab wound, cardiac suture should be attempted at once. Although the patient is unconscious at the beginning of the procedure, relief of the tamponade will increase blood pressure, decrease venous pressure, and re-establish cerebral circulation with a quick return of consciousness. Consequently, although the patient is comatose at the start, an anesthetic should always be used.

## PROGNOSIS

The prognosis depends on the speed with which the condition is recognized and operation performed. If immediate death from hemorrhage does not occur, cardiac tamponade may be quickly fatal, while after operation purulent pericarditis and pneumonia often prove serious complications. The location of the wound is significant from the standpoint of prognosis. In Elkin's series six out of eight patients who had wounds of the right ventricle recovered. Left ventricular wounds are more serious, only two in this location recovering in the series of 22 cases reported by Elkin. Wounds of the pulmonary artery, the auricles, and intrapericardial part of the aorta have a poorer prognosis, because of the technical difficulties involved in successful suture.

Rarely some foreign bodies lodge in the heart wall and become encysted; others do not remain in one location but migrate until they are free in one of the cardiac chambers, in which event embolism may take place. The great veins in some reported cases have conveyed foreign bodies to the heart from distant wounds.

## NON-PENETRATING WOUNDS

Equally serious cardiac injuries can be produced by contusion or compression. Beck calls attention to our erroneous conception of the heart as an organ that is well protected by a long thoracic cage, whereas in truth it lies against the sternum, vulnerable to any sudden blow on the chest and capable of being buttressed against the bodies of the thoracic vertebrae posteriorly.

**Penetration of Myocardium.** Blows over the precordium may fracture the sternum or ribs, and the cavity of the heart may be penetrated by the ends of the fragments. A partial penetration of the muscle of the heart may result in healing with subsequent cardiac rupture or the formation of a cardiac aneurysm. A cardiac bruise from this type of injury may also heal with the production of subsequent functional disturbances. Sudden indirect forces resulting from falls may cause compression of the legs on the abdomen and injure the heart, while violent blows on the chest may cause laceration of a cardiac chamber or the aorta and result in sudden death with no external evidence of injury.

In cardiac rupture the cause of death is neither the injury nor the hemorrhage; it usually is cardiac tamponade. In a certain number of these cases where the outcome is not immediately fatal, careful examination will reveal the tamponade, in which event prompt action saves the patient's life. **RECOGNITION OF THE PRESENCE OF ACUTE TAMPONADE SHOULD NOT BE DIFFICULT IF THE POSSIBILITY OF ITS OCCURRENCE IS ALWAYS KEPT IN MIND WHEN EXAMINING AN ACCIDENT CASE.** As an emergency measure, Beck<sup>24</sup> advises tapping of the pericardial cavity at intervals until operation can be performed. This procedure (page 164) serves to confirm the diagnosis and to relieve temporarily the cardiac tamponade.

A few months ago I observed one case where the seriousness of the signs of cardiac tamponade were unrecognized following a stab wound of the heart with an ice pick in the fifth interspace about 8 cm. from the midsternal line. The patient was delirious on admission to the hospital and later pulseless. Spontaneous recovery took place without operative interference. Such occurrences, however, are rare.

#### SYMPTOMS

**Immediate Onset.** Cardiac trauma from non-penetrating wounds of the chest may cause symptoms closely resembling those that follow a coronary occlusion. If a patient previously in good health receives a blow over the precordium and immediately thereafter develops dyspnea, irregularity of the pulse, and pain in the chest of the anginal type, cardiac trauma should always be considered. These symptoms often lead to a diagnosis of cardiac neurosis with which trauma is so often confused. If, accompanying these symptoms, electrocardiographic changes appear that were not observed prior to the accident, the presence of a traumatic lesion becomes more than a possibility.

**Late Onset.** In some cases the onset of the symptoms does not immediately follow the accident; instead, the symptoms appear at varying intervals, depending on the size, location, and the progress of the myocardial lesion. The latter may result in scar formation, but the patient is always liable to develop cardiac aneurysm or cardiac rupture at a later date, particularly if rest is not enforced. Contusions of the heart which are productive of large areas of myocardial injury, therefore, may in some instances behave quite like cardiac infarcts.

**Functional Disturbances.** Cardiac trauma may be followed by disturbances of a functional nature including arrhythmias, angina, and congestive failure.

**CONGESTIVE FAILURE.** Either right or left ventricular failure may appear on effort during the post-traumatic period, particularly in the presence of an already damaged heart. The onset may follow trauma immediately, or it may be delayed for some time if the lesion produced in the cardiac structure is of the type that slowly reduces myocardial reserve, for example, rupture of a valve or prolonged paroxysms of abnormal rhythms accompanied by high ventricular rates. Beck's experiments point to the fact that severe contusion of a perfectly healthy heart may at times lead to acute dilatation and decompensation.

**ANGINA.** While trauma directly applied to the coronary tree may occasionally provoke symptoms of angina in a normal person, the likelihood is even greater if coronary arteriosclerosis is present. The nervous shock that results directly from the accident may reflexly cause coronary spasm, and in a susceptible person the anginal seizure may appear. If chest pain is complained of immediately after trauma and is followed by the sudden death of the patient, the effect of the accident on the integrity of the coronary circulation may be strongly suspected. Characteristic alterations

in the T-waves of the electrocardiogram appearing after the accident lends support to the diagnosis.

### ARRHYTHMIAS

The appearance of arrhythmias following trauma many times focuses attention on the heart. Premature beats or extrasystoles may be noticed for

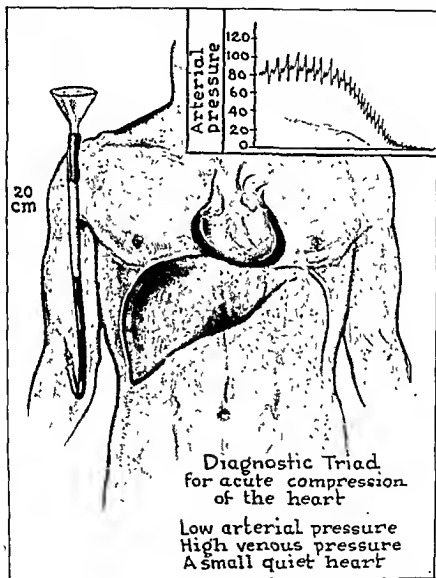


FIG. 158. Acute compression of the heart. Redrawn from Beck.\*

the first time after an accident; and the more attention is directed toward them, the more important they seem to the patient. In many instances

\* Reprinted by the courtesy of the editor of the American Heart Journal.

they may have existed unnoticed prior to the injury and are accentuated during a period when the patient has considerable attention directed toward his physical condition. In themselves premature beats prove nothing. Even paroxysms of tachycardia of auricular or nodal origin are usually unimportant and unrelated to trauma. However, ventricular tachy-



A

FIG. 159. A. Operative scar. B. Roentgen series Case 105. 1. Taken three days after suture of heart. There is uniform density over the left hemithorax more marked at base which obscures the lung detail. The outline of the left diaphragmatic dome is obliterated. The heart and the mediastinum are displaced to the right. 2. Taken three weeks after suture of heart. There is less effusion. The heart is still displaced to the right. 3. Taken two months after suture. The left lung has completely re-expanded and there is still further absorption of fluid at left base. The heart and mediastinum occupy a normal position. 4. Taken six months after suture. The heart is normal in size and shape. C. A serial electrocardiogram taken after successful suture. Note the change in shape of the RS-T segment in all leads. This alteration can be attributed mainly to the wound and the secondary inflammatory changes in the pericardium.

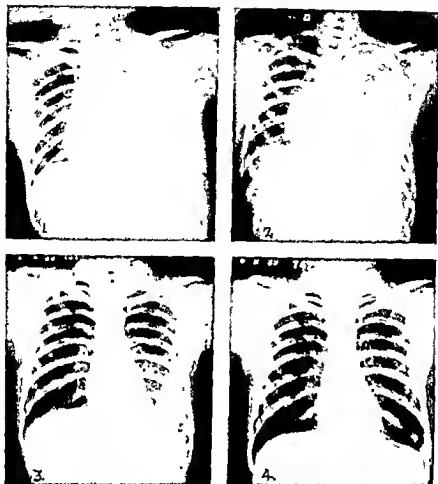


FIG. 159 B

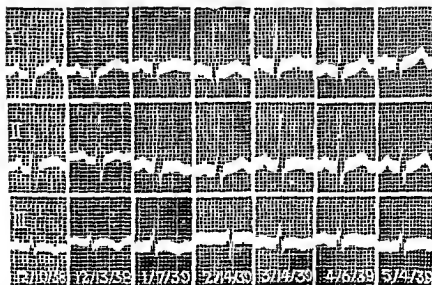


FIG. 159 C

cardia may be the direct result of myocardial injury and should be promptly controlled because of the tendency of this arrhythmia to terminate in ventricular fibrillation and death.

Cardiac injury may bring on an attack of auricular flutter or fibrillation in either normal or diseased hearts. If the heart is healthy and not extensively involved in the trauma, the abnormal rhythm is usually easily controlled. However, if the heart is damaged and the arrhythmia is continuous with a high ventricular rate, congestive failure may be precipitated.

**HEART BLOCK.** Injury to the heart muscle that is followed by hemorrhage in the region of the conduction system may cause varying degrees of heart block. Similar lesions have been reported in experimental animals, and some case reports in literature point to this occurrence in man. To establish this happening beyond a doubt, it is necessary to have in evidence a normal electrocardiogram taken before the accident and an electrocardiogram showing the appearance of heart block directly following the trauma.

### ILLUSTRATIVE CASE

#### STAB WOUND OF THE RIGHT VENTRICLE—ACUTE CARDIAC TAMPONADE—RECOVERY FOLLOWING SUTURE

**Case 105.** A. E., an American school boy of 14, was brought to the receiving ward of Memorial Hospital on December 8, 1938 by police ambulance, approximately one-half hour following a stab wound in the left chest with a pocket knife.

**PHYSICAL EXAMINATION.** The patient was unconscious on arrival and showed a pale cyanosis. The jugular veins were distended. The pulse was imperceptible at the wrist and the respirations were rapid and shallow. The heart sounds were faint, the rhythm regular, and the cardiac rate was 70. The blood pressure could not be obtained by ordinary clinical methods. There was a stab wound one-half inch long in the fifth intercostal space immediately to the left of the sternum. Active bleeding had ceased. The liver was not palpable. The extremities were cold and pale.

**DIAGNOSIS.** Acute cardiac compression (Fig 153).

**INDICATION.** Immediate operation.

**OPERATION.** (Dr. Bruce Fleming.) As anesthesia was begun, incision was made parallel to the ribs and the wound of entrance completely excised down to the pleura. The incision was enlarged and four inches of ribs above and below the incision were removed. The pericardial sac was greatly distended, contained a puncture wound, and was completely filled with a firm blood clot. The thoracic cavity contained blood and clots. The pericardium was incised through the wound and clots removed. Traction sutures of silk were placed in the myocardium, one near the apex centrally and one cephalad to the wound in the heart, while bleeding from the latter was controlled by the finger of the assistant. The estimated size of the myocardial puncture was three-eighths of an inch. Two through and through chromic gut sutures were placed in the myocardium, completely closing the wound. Blood was removed from the thorax and pericardium and strained into citrate solution and returned to the patient intravenously. The control sutures were then removed and the pericardium sutured. The thoracic wall was closed without drainage. Dressings were applied.

**COURSE.** Following operation the patient was placed in an oxygen tent. The pulse became palpable as soon as the pericardial sac was opened and the acute cardiac compression relieved. At this time the first blood pressure reading obtained was 98/56.



A roentgen-ray examination made on the first postoperative day (Fig. 159 B) showed a uniform density over the left hemithorax, more marked at the base which obscured the lung detail. The heart and mediastinum were displaced to the right. Conclusion: Pleural effusion with cardiac displacement.

An examination made on the fifteenth postoperative day showed a decrease in the effusion. The pleural was thickened and the heart was still displaced to the right.

A roentgen-ray examination two months later showed that the left lung had completely re-expanded with absorption of the fluid at the left base. The heart and mediastinum occupied normal positions.

The blood count immediately following operation was hemoglobin 50 per cent, R.B.C. 2,900,000, W.B.C. 14,000; P. 82, L. 18. Following several transfusions it was raised to hemoglobin 82 per cent, R.B.C. 4,460,000.

Electrocardiograms were taken at frequent intervals postoperatively. The changes that took place with healing are shown in Fig. 159 C.

The patient made a good recovery and was discharged from the hospital seven weeks after the operation.

## CARDIAC EMERGENCIES

While heart disease in most instances gives ample warning of its presence, often assuming the form of a chronic illness, situations may arise that demand quick decision and prompt treatment. Although these have been discussed fully under their appropriate headings elsewhere in the text, for convenience and quick reference I have attempted to group here the cardiac emergencies commonly encountered, with some of the present-day views regarding their diagnosis and treatment.

Cardiac emergencies are common in surgical as well as in medical practice. Many times treatment must be begun before a complete physical examination is made. Likewise, in some instances the past history is unknown or difficult to obtain in detail. Since the leading symptoms must be relieved in some measure before the etiologic possibilities are reviewed, it seems appropriate to begin a discussion of emergency treatment with a review of the symptoms of cardiovascular origin that are usually responsible for these calls. These are chest pain, dyspnea, syncope, and palpitation.

## CHEST PAIN

Chest pain in cardiac patients requiring emergency treatment may be caused by acute coronary occlusion, angina pectoris, pulmonary embolism, acute pericarditis, or dissecting aneurysm. Angina pectoris and coronary occlusion, the complications of arteriosclerotic heart disease, are the most common causes. The significant features in their differentiation that may prove useful in emergencies are summarized in Table XIV.

Coronary occlusion is the most frequent cardiac emergency associated with prolonged chest pain, and the increasing familiarity of the layman with the symptoms of this condition usually bring minor episodes promptly under the supervision of the physician. The pain of occlusion calls for immediate administration of morphine in sufficient doses to quiet the patient. It is best to give an initial dose of 15 mg. ( $\frac{1}{4}$  grain), and, if necessary, repeat the dose in 15 to 20 minutes. Quick relief of pain is a major factor in turning the balance in favor of recovery. Do not give digitalis unless congestive failure is precipitated. If the patient is at home, he should be made comfortable in the room where he is found until his condition permits his removal. If the seizure takes place on the street, the patient should be moved to the nearest shelter to await transportation to the hospital. Oxygen therapy, if available, is an advantage, particularly in the presence of cyanosis. Injection of concentrated glucose (50 Gm. in

TABLE XIV  
DIFFERENTIAL DIAGNOSIS IN CHEST PAIN

|                        | ACUTE CORONARY OCCLUSION                                                                                                                        | ANGINA PECTORIS                                                  |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Appearance of patient. | Restless, ashen color, dyspnea, sweating. Shock may be present. Congestive failure may develop.                                                 | Patient quiet and immobile. Good color. No dyspnea. No sweating. |
| Pulse.                 | Rapid and weak. Paroxysmal ventricular tachycardia present occasionally.                                                                        | Normal.                                                          |
| Blood Pressure.        | Usually falls to low level. Pulsus alternans may be observed (page 407).                                                                        | Normal or elevated.                                              |
| Temperature.           | Subnormal when first seen.                                                                                                                      | Normal.                                                          |
| Heart Examination.     | Heart sounds weak and often rapid. Gallop rhythm is not uncommon. Friction may be audible if the area of infarction is on the anterior surface. | May be normal.                                                   |
| Duration of pain.      | Hours.                                                                                                                                          | Few minutes.                                                     |
| Onset.                 | At any time. Common during sleep.                                                                                                               | Following exertion, excitement, or overeating.                   |
| Effect of nitrites.    | Pain not relieved. This drug may be harmful.                                                                                                    | Quick relief usual.                                              |

100 cc.) into the arm vein may give quick relief to a failing myocardium. Coronary occlusion rarely occurs without pain. When it does, other symptoms of collapse of the circulation may appear suddenly, especially severe dyspnea (cardiac asthma). The onset of an attack of paroxysmal dyspnea, particularly when a previous history of anginal attacks is elicited, should always suggest the diagnosis of acute coronary occlusion.

**Other Conditions.** Herrick<sup>153</sup> has called attention to a number of other conditions that may be associated with chest pain and consequently be confused with acute coronary occlusion. He lists under this category: effort syndrome, cardiac neurosis, cardiac arrhythmias, pericarditis, syphilitic aortitis, aortic aneurysm, pleurisy, pneumonia, massive collapse of the lung, bronchial carcinoma, pulmonary embolism, herpes zoster, spinal osteo-arthritis, gall stones, peptic ulcer, neuralgic or fibrotic causes local to the chest wall, hernias through the diaphragm, carcinoma of the stomach, and tabetic crises.

If the chest pain is transient and the patient, when first seen by the physician, has a good pulse and blood pressure and on auscultation the heart sounds are unchanged, angina pectoris rather than occlusion may be suspected. A tablet of nitroglycerine, 0.6 mg. (1/100 grain) under the tongue should bring prompt relief. If the pain continues, a similar dose may be given in five minutes. After emergency relief has been obtained, the patient should be advised to have a complete cardiac study made in the near future.

A large embolus lodging in one of the branches of the pulmonary artery may obstruct the flow of blood from the right side of the heart (acute cor pulmonale) and cause sudden death. If the patient is alive when

seen, an advanced degree of shock is present. The symptoms may then resemble acute coronary occlusion: chest pain, pallor, thready pulse, dyspnea, falling blood pressure, and shock. The differential diagnosis in some cases may be most difficult if not impossible to make. However, the points favoring pulmonary embolism are: a recent surgical operation (abdomen or pelvis), fracture, phlebitis, or chronic cardiac disease where an auricular thrombus may have formed. An acute cor pulmonale may produce a pulsation in the second or third interspaces just to the left of the sternum, occasionally accompanied by a friction rub, dilated jugular veins, and marked cyanosis. Many times these signs are lacking. If the patient survives long enough for an electrocardiogram to be made, this may help to make the differential diagnosis (see Fig. 251). Later cough, hemoptysis, and signs of consolidation over the area of the pulmonary infarct may serve to clear the picture.

Absolute bed rest, morphine, oxygen, and support of the failing right heart by venesection and, if the emergency is extreme, intravenous injection of strophanthin comprise measures of value in cases of pulmonary embolism. Surgical removal of the embolus is occasionally possible when the accident occurs in the hospital in the presence of a skilled surgical team.

Acute pericarditis may cause sudden chest pain in younger patients, but this is a rare happening. The pain usually is caused by the extension of the inflammation to the pleura and diaphragm. The age of the patient, and evidences of rheumatic infection serve to differentiate this type of pain from that caused by anoxemia of the heart muscle that occurs in coronary disease.

## DYSPNEA

A sudden attack of dyspnea (usually nocturnal) may be the first symptom of heart disease to appear. It is the most common cardiac emergency of general practice. The patient, usually a man, is awakened suddenly by a sense of suffocation. Dyspnea is present, and it quickly increases to orthopnea. When the physician arrives, he finds the patient's chest full of râles, the color ashen, and the general appearance one of impending death. There may be cough with frothy, blood-tinged sputum. This is the picture of "cardiac asthma" or paroxysmal cardiac dyspnea.

**Immediate Treatment.** Unless the sudden left ventricular failure is promptly relieved, it may terminate in acute edema of the lungs. Morphine, 15 mg. ( $\frac{1}{4}$  grain) given hypodermically and repeated, if necessary, in 20 minutes, is usually most efficient in bringing the attack to an end. When pulmonary edema complicates the picture, a venesection should be done, although venostasis or bloodless venesection may prove helpful. The latter procedure consists in applying a tight bandage to the arms and upper thighs close to the trunk to prevent the return of venous blood and in this manner diminish the pulmonary congestion. When the attack

subsides, the compression bandages are gradually released. If the patient is in the hospital when the attack occurs, an oxygen tent is useful.

When the emergency treatment has been given, further observation of the patient who is recovering from a sudden attack of cardiac asthma will usually disclose other evidences of heart disease. The victims of these attacks almost always suffer from the effects of a long standing hypertension and show cardiac hypertrophy, chiefly left ventricular. In many instances the gallop rhythm of failure may be heard on auscultation in the region of the cardiac apex. *Pulsus alternans* may also appear in these cases. If the examination reveals any of these signs, a guarded prognosis should be given to the patient's family. The duration of life of older patients who have attacks of cardiac asthma is hardly ever over one year from the time of the first attack.

Careful follow-up treatment is recommended in all cases seen in the first attack of cardiac asthma. Digitalization should be carried out (page 82), and suitable doses of diuretic drugs, particularly the organic mercurial group, should be given, even in the absence of edema, for the effect they often have in preventing the recurrence of the seizures. The patient should be told to sleep in a semi-reclining position and to avoid slipping down in the bed during the night.

**Allergic or Bronchial Asthma.** Spells of dyspnea caused by allergic or bronchial asthma in an elderly patient may be confusing at times (page 114). The presence of hypertension and the cardiac findings above described point to a cardiac background, particularly if the attacks are of recent origin. A history of chronic cough, wheezing throughout the day, attacks of asthma for many years, the presence of emphysema, and a recent upper respiratory infection point to bronchial asthma. Epinephrine is indicated in the bronchial or allergic type of asthma, but is strongly contraindicated in cardiac asthma (Chapter 16).

### SYNCOPE

When the cause of syncope is cardiac, the physician obtains his first diagnostic clue from the rate and rhythm of the pulse. When no pulse is felt at the wrist, or when it is under 20 beats per minute in an elderly person, an Adams-Stokes seizure should be suspected. Since the auricles continue to beat, evidence of their activity should be looked for in the neck veins. If regular pulsations can be demonstrated, proof of the diagnosis is furnished (page 375). In the presence of an Adams-Stokes seizure, intracardiac injections of epinephrine should not be used indiscriminately when the exact cardiac mechanism present during the seizure is unknown. Where ventricular tachycardia characterizes the attacks, the careless use of epinephrine may remove the only chance the patient has of spontaneous recovery (page 403).

**Paroxysmal Tachycardia.** The sudden onset of paroxysmal rapid heart action may, in some instances, be accompanied by a marked diminu-

tion in the supply of blood to the brain. Syncope follows. If an attack of auricular flutter is accompanied by one to one ventricular response, the unusually rapid heart rate may be incompatible with circulatory efficiency. Paroxysmal tachycardia may likewise produce syncope in elderly patients where advanced sclerosis limits the cerebral blood flow. In desperate situations if the patient has not been taking digitalis previously and the paroxysms are accompanied by the sudden onset of congestive failure, intravenous use of strophanthin, 0.6 mg. (1/100 grain) is justified (page 398).

In paroxysms of tachycardia in young people when no signs of cardiac embarrassment are in evidence, less heroic measures suffice (ice water, aromatic spirits of ammonia, whiskey taken straight in tablespoonful doses, carotid sinus pressure, quinidine, eye ball pressure, holding the breath, bending over with the head between the knees, heat or cold over the precordium). When the patient's condition is good, there is no occasion for alarm, for the paroxysms of tachycardia are self-limiting. Recumbency, however, should be maintained during the seizure to prevent vertigo or syncope.

**Carotid-Sinus Syncope.** Fainting attacks often accompany hypersensitiveness of the carotid sinus, and these may be associated with a slow pulse. Recovery is prompt, and the diagnosis of the nature of the attack usually offers little difficulty (page 378).

**Emotional Syncope.** Certain types of patients are always fainting and sending for the doctor. Emotional episodes in the presence of neurocirculatory instability precipitate the attack of syncope. A history of previous seizures, the good quality of the pulse, and the absence of any signs of heart disease on examination suffice to make the diagnosis.

A high vagal tone, associated with sinus arrest, may produce syncope (page 379). The treatment is recumbency and atropine.

**Aortic Lesions.** At times patients with aortic stenosis and aortic regurgitation are subject to spells of syncope. Harrison<sup>249</sup> attributes these to an anoxemia that is diffuse, involving the left ventricle at the time of increased activity. Syncopal attacks occasionally observed in children with patency of the ductus arteriosus may be caused by a similar mechanism, since the mechanical effects of this defect are quite like those produced by an aortic regurgitant lesion.

**Extracardiac Factors.** Syncope is produced many times by factors unrelated to the heart. The more common types I shall mention here, since in an emergency a differential diagnosis from heart disease is required. Epilepsy can be differentiated from the Adams-Stokes seizures on the basis of the tongue biting, the character of the convulsive movements, and the quality and rate of the pulse during seizures. In cerebral accidents, the type of breathing and the evidence of paralysis are distinguishing features. Sudden hemorrhage may be followed by syncope, and this may be accompanied by a rapidly rising pulse and marked pallor.

**Thrombi.** In mitral stenosis and following a coronary occlusion, mural thrombi may form in the heart, and these may be swept into the circulation at any time with the sudden appearance of symptoms, the nature of which will depend on the distant area affected. Vegetations in subacute bacterial endocarditis may likewise become detached with similar sequelae. The sudden onset of coma and paralysis should always suggest these complications to the physician who is summoned in the emergency.

### PALPITATION

The sudden appearance of palpitation often accompanies one of the abnormal rhythms. Initial attacks of paroxysmal tachycardia may cause great alarm on the part of the patient and his family, while emergency medical aid is less likely to be sought for the subsequent attacks unless they are unusually severe or prolonged. Abnormal rhythms should be differentiated from simple tachycardia. The latter is usually present in patients showing other signs that label the episode as purely functional. The heart rate, while rapid, will be noted to decrease gradually. Such is not the case in patients suffering from attacks of paroxysmal tachycardia, for in these both onset and offset are sudden.

**Abnormal rhythms** commonly encountered are auricular fibrillation, auricular flutter, and paroxysmal auricular or nodal tachycardia. Since these mechanisms have already been fully discussed (Chapter 12), only a summary of important data will be included here.

Auricular fibrillation, when paroxysmal, may occasionally be observed in the absence of any other sign of heart disease. It frequently accompanies hyperthyroidism. If the patient is in good condition and the heart otherwise normal, the only therapeutic measures indicated are rest and the administration of a capsule of quinidine sulfate, 0.3 Gm. (5 grains). If cardiac disease is present and the heart is increased in size, particularly if signs of congestive failure are recognized, QUINIDINE SHOULD NEVER BE GIVEN. If the patient has not previously been receiving digitalis and this fact can be definitely established, there is no contraindication to the intravenous administration of strophanthin if the abnormal rhythm is placing a severe strain on the myocardium and early signs of cardiac failure are appearing. Enough digitalis should be given subsequently by mouth to maintain the ventricular rate at 70 to 75.

A persistently rapid and regular cardiac rate between 130 and 160 beats per minute is more apt to be flutter than tachycardia. The breathing, the color of the patient, and the presence of any signs of cardiac failure should guide the physician in his estimation of the condition of the myocardium and provide a key to the type of emergency treatment to use. Here again, if evidence is at hand that digitalis has not been previously given, full doses may be prescribed to control the ventricular rate. The future course of therapy depends on subsequent studies (page 393).

Paroxysmal tachycardia is a common cause of the sudden onset of palpitation in patients who have no other evidence of heart disease. The

prognosis in young individuals, even in the presence of extremely rapid ventricular rates (160 to 200), is invariably good, and death in a paroxysm is practically unknown. Normal rhythm may reappear before the physician arrives. If so, there remain only the effects of the seizure on the nervous system to treat, in which event a few doses of phenobarbital suffice. If the attack persists, the measures previously described may be instituted in order (page 506). A follow up study is needed to determine the underlying cause and to establish, if possible, satisfactory prophylactic treatment (page 382).

## WOUNDS OF THE HEART

Puncture wounds of the heart may be small, with the gradual development of a cardiac tamponade by leakage of the blood into the pericardial sac. Since many of these cases can be saved by emergency surgical measures (page 494), it is important to act promptly in the presence of the following signs: fall in blood pressure, rise in venous pressure, dyspnea progressing to orthopnea, cyanosis, tachycardia, and decreasing pulse volume. They are all produced by a rising intrapericardial pressure compressing the heart and preventing proper diastolic filling.

## PERICARDIAL EFFUSION

Occasionally, as a pericardial effusion slowly accumulates, the symptoms of cardiac tamponade may appear at a much slower rate. Nevertheless, when the intrapericardial pressure becomes elevated, the situation becomes an emergency and prompt treatment may be life-saving. The technic for aspiration of the pericardial sac is outlined on page 164.

## CONGESTIVE HEART FAILURE

In a small number of cases the symptoms of congestive cardiac failure come on suddenly, and emergency treatment is needed. If digitalis is given under these circumstances to the patient of another physician, the amount is gauged by the previous dosage (page 82). If this cannot be determined, it is wise to proceed with caution. Bed rest and morphine are safer measures to employ. Severe dyspnea may be caused by large pleural collections of fluid, in which event a thoracentesis may be useful as an emergency measure (page 94).

## CARDIAC RESUSCITATION

Ventricular standstill or ventricular fibrillation are the mechanisms usually responsible for sudden death. When either occurs in a badly damaged heart, all attempts to restore co-ordinated contraction are futile. However, as Beck has shown,<sup>25</sup> a normal heart that stops suddenly can



be made to beat again. This accident may occur during operations as a result of the toxic effect of the anesthetic, hemorrhage, or cardiac trauma, or it may be produced reflexly by careless handling of the abdominal viscera.

*Defibrillation of the ventricles has been accomplished by Beck. His method is described on page 474. If ventricular standstill is present, intra-cardiac injection of epinephrine may be successful (page 475).*

In emergencies when efficient cardiac contractions suddenly cease, the first thought should be to maintain the blood supply to the vital cerebral structures. Oxygen should be given through a face mask, and direct cardiac massage begun to prevent irreparable damage in the brain areas while measures for restoring normal cardiac contractions are being instituted.

## ACUTE CORONARY OCCLUSION

## SYMPTOMS AND SIGNS

1. **Pain.** Usually lasts an hour or more but in rare cases it may be absent. An attack of paroxysmal dyspnea or cardiac asthma may be the presenting symptom of the occlusion.
2. **Shock.** Patient usually cold, pale, sweating with rapid, thready pulse and low blood pressure. In small occlusions shock symptoms may be very few or absent altogether.
3. **Fever, leukocytosis, friction rub, acceleration of the sedimentation time** are LATER SIGNS.

## TREATMENT

**Rule:** If the patient presents the textbook picture, the diagnosis is easy. *If in doubt, be cautious and prove the absence of occlusion before allowing the patient to be up and about.*

1. **Bed Rest.**
2. **Morphine for Pain.** Give enough to control the pain satisfactorily, usually 0.016 Gm. ( $\frac{1}{4}$  grain) at first dose and repeat in half hour if necessary and every two or three hours thereafter as required. Respiratory rate is guide to dosage. Nitroglycerine is useless.
3. **Oxygen.** A great advantage if available. Use nasal catheter method in the home (page 99). A tent (page 101) is the method of choice in the hospital. Oxygen should be continued until the pain disappears and the cyanosis is absent.
4. **Digitalis is Contraindicated in Acute Coronary Occlusion Unless Symptoms of Cardiac Failure are Precipitated by the Accident.** Digitalis may cause an attack of ventricular fibrillation. Quinidine has been recommended for routine administration to prevent this complication (page 274).
5. **Glucose Is of Value.** It increases available glycogen and provides food for the distressed myocardium. Give 50 cc. of 50 per cent solution very slowly into the vein using a 50 cc. syringe in an emergency.
6. **For Shock,** caffein sodium benzoate, 0.5 Gm. ( $7\frac{1}{2}$  grains) hypodermically.

## HEART FAILURE

I. CONGESTIVE TYPE  
(page 73)

## SYMPTOMS

Dyspnea progressing to orthopnea. Edema. Large liver. Râles in the chest. Increased venous pressure. Any arrhythmia may be associated with congestive failure.

TREATMENT  
(page 74)

1. Bed Rest.
2. Morphine, .016 Gm. ( $\frac{1}{4}$  grain) third hour as required.
3. Obtain an experienced attendant at home or send the patient to the hospital.
4. Restrict Fluids.
5. Digitalization (page 75).
6. Mercurial diuretics (page 88).
7. Oxygen (page 98).

II. PAROXYSMAL CARDIAC DYSPNEA OR CARDIAC ASTHMA  
(Acute left ventricular failure)

## SYMPTOMS

Those of advanced heart disease. Sudden attacks of dyspnea occur usually at night and may progress to orthopnea. The lungs quickly fill with râles. Later edema occurs. Death may follow in the absence of prompt treatment.

## TREATMENT

1. Morphine, 15 mg. ( $\frac{1}{4}$  grain) by hypodermic immediately.
2. Venesection, 400 to 600 cc. (Indications: cyanosis, distended jugular veins and dyspnea).
3. Oxygen if available. Nasal catheter method at home. Tent if the patient is in the hospital.
4. Aminophyllin, 0.24 Gm. (3 to 4 grains) intravenously.
5. If attacks recur frequently, mercurial diuretics may be valuable in lessening the incidence in some cases.

## THE PAROXYSMAL TACHYCARDIAS

AURICULAR

Heart rate is 160 to 200.

Onset sudden. Offset sudden.

## SYMPTOMS

Palpitation.

Vertigo.

Syncope (rare).

## DURATION

Few minutes to few hours.

Very rarely paroxysms continue over a week.

## CAUSE

None may be present

Heart usually normal.

Heart disease may be present (most common type rheumatic).

## TREATMENT

Try in order:

Carotid sinus pressure (page 379).

Vagal stimulation:

Eye ball pressure.

Tickle throat to cause gagging.

Emetic (*ipecac*).

Quinidine (page 383).

Mecholyl (?).

VENTRICULAR

Heart rate rapid (120 to 160), regular. At times may be irregular.

## SYMPTOMS

Onset abrupt. Premature beats occur before seizure, occasionally in runs of two or three. Often these may be recognized and act as a warning.

Heart disease present, usually serious. Commonly coronary occlusion.

## TREATMENT

Quinidine.

Carotid pressure *ineffectual*.

Digitalis dangerous.

## AURICULAR FLUTTER

1. Heart rate, 100 to 150. It may change.
2. Onset is sudden.
3. The termination may be gradual or sudden.
4. Heart disease is usually present.
5. Carotid sinus pressure often slows the ventricular rate.

## TREATMENT

Digitalize. This changes flutter to fibrillation. Withdrawal of the digitalis may then cause the rhythm to return to normal. If advanced heart disease is present, a maintenance dose of digitalis should be continued (page 394).

Quinidine has been used to stop paroxysms if no heart disease is present, or cardiac damage is slight. Digitalis, however, is the drug of choice.

## AURICULAR FIBRILLATION

1. Heart rate, 100 to 160.
2. Rhythm: Irregular. EXERCISE INCREASES THE IRREGULARITY.
3. Heart disease.

Almost always present.

In rare instances the heart may be normal.

4. The onset is sudden.
5. Termination may be abrupt.

## TREATMENT

Digitalize if heart disease is present (page 395). A good response to the drug may be predicted. In instances in which fibrillation is paroxysmal and heart damage is slight, quinidine is indicated.

## ADAMS-STOKES SEIZURES

### SYMPTOMS

Syncope. Convulsive movements. No paralysis. Evidence of arteriosclerosis is apt to be present and the patient is usually beyond middle life. There may be a previous history of seizures. The pulse is slow (10 to 30 per minute) or the patient may be pulseless. Recovery occurs in a few minutes to five minutes. Death may occur in any of the seizures.

### MECHANISM

There may be a cardiac standstill or prefibrillary type of ventricular tachycardia with short runs of ventricular fibrillation. These cause cerebral anemia.

### HEART DISEASE

This is present, usually with partial A-V block alternating with periods of complete A-V block. Normal sinus rhythm is seen in rare cases. The heart block usually follows a gradual or acute occlusion of a coronary artery. Other causes of heart block (gumma, tumor, endocarditis, etc.) are rare.

### TREATMENT

Usually unsatisfactory at the time of the seizure. If electrocardiographic proof of cardiac standstill has been obtained, intracardiac injection of epinephrine may be given (page 475). Use 0.5 cc. of a 1-1000 solution. In an extreme emergency, do not wait to boil up equipment. Use lumbar puncture needle and 2 cc. syringe. **LIMIT USE OF INTRACARDIAC INJECTIONS TO THIS TYPE OF EMERGENCY AND CASES OF SUDDEN CARDIAC STANDSTILL DURING ANESTHESIA.**

### FOLLOW-UP ADVICE

Bed rest until a complete cardiac study is obtained. To prevent recurrence of attacks, many drugs have been recommended. These include ephedrine, benzedrine, thytoid extract, metrazol, and barium chloride (page 403).

## EMBOLISM

### MECHANISM

Detached thrombi (1) from auricles in cases of mitral stenosis or subacute bacterial endocarditis and from ventricles in cases of coronary occlusion or subacute bacterial endocarditis, (2) from pelvic or thigh veins on tenth to fourteenth postoperative day. Emboli go to lungs or systemic vessels depending on the point of origin. From right heart, destination is lung except in rare instances where there is a patent foramen ovale. Air or fat emboli follow trauma.

### SYMPTOMS

If embolus lodges in extremity, there is first PAIN, followed in a few hours by pallor and drop in temperature on affected side. No arterial pulsation is present below the point of occlusion.

### TREATMENT

1. Morphine for pain.
2. Keep the patient warm and combat shock. The extremity should be wrapped in cotton.
3. Oxygen for pulmonary embolism in presence of cyanosis and dyspnea (page 98).
4. Consider embolectomy if the site is known and the vessel can be quickly reached by the surgeon. If gangrene present: amputation.
5. Avoid massage.

### PREVENTIVE MEASURES

These are important postoperatively in the prevention of pulmonary embolism (acute cor pulmonale).

1. Trendelenburg position.
2. Carbon dioxide administration several times daily during the first 48 hours.
3. Frequent deep breathing exercises.
4. Keep extremities warm both during and after operation.
5. Massage and passive motion of legs during the first 48 hours after operation.
6. Thyroid gland (U.S.P.) may speed venous return and is useful in carefully selected cases.

## PERICARDIAL EFFUSION

## ETIOLOGY

Pneumonia. In this disease the effusion is apt to become purulent (page 171).

Tuberculosis. Large effusions often occur (page 177).

Rheumatic fever. Large effusions are rare but can occur (page 162).

Malignancy. Large effusions rare.

## SIGNS

Friction rub.

Fever.

If fluid accumulates in amounts above 300 cc., signs of compression of the the heart may develop. The onset of symptoms may be sudden: dyspnea, cyanosis, increased venous pressure, and fall in pulse pressure (page 164).

## TREATMENT

Pericardial paracentesis. For technic, see page 166.

Surgical drainage if effusion purulent (page 174).

Sodium cacodylate intravenously in daily doses of 5 to 8 grains (Willius).

## WOUNDS OF THE HEART

## SIGNS

Shock with evidence of puncture wound of the chest in cardiac area. Falling blood pressure, increase in venous pressure and other signs (if patient survives) of acute cardiac tamponade.

## TREATMENT

Immediate operation. If knife or foreign body still in the wound, do not remove it until the field is exposed and suture can be carried out (page 494).



PERIPHERAL CIRCULATORY FAILURE  
(“SHOCK” “COLLAPSE”)

## CAUSES

1. Diminished blood volume with a subsequent decrease in the cardiac output following:
  - Hemorrhage.
  - Trauma with leakage of fluid into tissues of the injured area thus decreasing venous return.
  - Diarrhea.
  - Vomiting.
2. Increase in the vascular bed (?) resulting from the action of toxins (vasodilators) in pneumonia, typhoid, etc.
3. Neurogenic. This type has more acute onset and is usually less serious. It is caused by decrease in the vascular tone and reflex cardiac inhibition (vagus).

## SYMPTOMS

1. Patient apathetic.
2. Pallor (blood lost or pooled in other areas).
3. Eyeballs sunken, features pinched (fluid loss).
4. Temperature subnormal. The extremities are cold.
5. Low blood pressure (80/60).
6. Pulse is weak and rapid.
7. Heart sounds are weak.
8. Respirations are slow.

## TREATMENT

Depends on factors operative in each case.

1. Keep the patient warm. The head should be low.
2. Give enough morphine to prevent restlessness and relieve pain.
3. Transfusion using hypertonic or colloidal solutions. Blood is ideal. As a substitute use two to four per cent saline or five to ten per cent glucose. Acacia has been recommended.
4. Drugs of vasoconstrictor group useful in neurogenic shock.
  - a. Epinephrine hydrochloride. One cc. of 1:1000 solution (subcutaneously).
  - b. Ephedrine hydrochloride can be given by mouth in doses of 0.048 Gm. ( $\frac{3}{4}$  grain).
  - c. Pituitrin (surgical), one cc. (subcutaneously).
  - d. Caffein with sodium benzoate (U.S.P. XI) given subcutaneously in 8 grain doses is occasionally of value.

Note. Digitalis is contraindicated and should never be used, since the rapid heart rate is compensatory owing to the diminution of the blood volume.

## PHYSIOTHERAPY IN THE TREATMENT OF HEART DISEASE

"It is part of the cure to wish to be cured."—SENECA, *Hippolytus*, 1, 249.

The use of physiotherapy in the treatment of cardiac patients is not a new concept. In the days of Hippocrates, physicians were skilled in these measures, and the location of the temples showed their regard for the healing powers of Nature. The ancient Celts and Romans recognized the virtues of the mineral springs and advocated hydrotherapy. Many Roman coins and other objects which support this belief have been found in the springs at Bad Nauheim. Spas were fashionable in Smollett's England, and the sharp-sighted Matthew Bramble in Humphrey Clinker gives a vivid summary of his opinion of the resorts of his time, "All these places have their vogue and then fashion changes." This remark is equally true at the present time, although the Matthew Brambles of our day do not suffer from rheumatism and do not travel in coaches. Coronary disease has become a more common affliction in an age when the transport plane replaces the coach.

The physiotherapeutic measures that have been recommended in the treatment of cardiovascular disease are many and varied, but are either little known or infrequently made use of by the general practitioner. Smollett's remark, "I have neither time nor opportunity to confirm by experiments the particular notions I entertain concerning the efficacy of these waters—" <sup>347</sup> can be applied equally well to his professional brethren almost 200 years later. This is unfortunate since the chronic sufferer from heart disease often believes his problems are being inadequately managed when something active is not being done for him, and many types of cardiac patients turn to the cults where activities of all forms, thermal, electric, and manual, are much in evidence. The patient consequently passes out of the hands of the physician who possesses a knowledge of the etiology, functional capacity, and treatment of heart disease, to be taken care of by the member of a cult who usually does not know the indications or contraindications for the various methods he employs.

The limited training in physiotherapy that the modern physician receives while in medical school probably accounts for the lack of facilities in most hospitals and communities throughout the country. The average physician does not know when and to what extent he should take advantage of physiotherapeutic methods in the treatment of chronic disease. However, even if he is alert in this respect, there are today few places in

our country where he can send patients with small incomes. The resorts and the elaborate establishments are still luxuries that most patients cannot afford. It remains for the local or state authorities to provide suitable sanatoria where patients of limited means can receive such treatment. Perhaps then physicians interested in this work may have time to confirm by experiments prevailing opinions on this form of therapy.

### SPA TREATMENT

The spa treatment provides physiotherapy with diet and rest, and this accounts largely for its success. It is this combination of the spa and its mineral springs with their endless supply of naturally charged water that attracts the patient, for it is doubtful if physiotherapy in itself has much appeal to the average patient. Consequently we should consider at the start the location, organization and equipment of the spa. This knowledge of the modern health resort should be familiar to every physician who allows his cardiac patients to undertake the journey seeking "the cure," for the best results are obtained when the indications and contraindications for this form of therapy are kept in mind.

There is a time during the course of treatment of every cardiac patient who is either convalescing from an attack of congestive failure or approaching the end of a rest period following a coronary occlusion, when surroundings become irksome, routine medicines sicken, and dissatisfaction with life, the family and local doctor becomes quite evident. Every physician recognizes this phenomenon. His patient is not ready to resume his customary duties, but is able to increase his activities and venture beyond the confines of the bedroom for the first time. The very chronicity of the cardiac ailment and the chorus of "don'ts" from family and doctor discourage the patient and make him yearn for a change. At this point in the management, if finances permit, properly supervised spa treatment may prove very helpful.

The spa is the Shangri-La of the modern business man. He enters upon a new regime of treatment with enthusiasm, and life takes on a rosy glow. He is removed at once from daily contact with motor noises, exhaust gases, traffic snarls, jangling telephones, city apartments, radio loud-speakers, night clubs, and well-wishing friends, and he enters upon a period of training at the spa where something is being done for him every minute of the day. Attendants hop, bands play, and it is small wonder that his lagging spirits rise. The initial circulatory stimulant is purely psychic but none the less beneficial. The patient meets other sufferers from similar ailments, and in their company he willingly follows the plan of treatment devoted to cardiac preservation. In this cheerful setting, where nothing is lacking to provide comfort and happiness, he is taught to live within the limits of his reserve. If the spa cannot cure, it can educate, and it is just as important to train the cardiac patient in habits of living as it is to train the diabetic in habits of eating.

The success of physiotherapy at the spa depends a great deal on the proper selection of cases. At the beginning of the present century Mackenzie in plain language pointed to the folly of physicians who allowed cardiac cripples totally unfit for travel to undertake long journeys to the spa for "the cure." He coined the term "Nauheim wrecks" for patients who returned much the worse for the experience. The physiotherapeutic measures used at the spa are most beneficial in ambulatory cases from Therapeutic Classes A, B, and C. In other words, patients with evidence of congestive cardiac failure, severe cardiac asthma, angina on slight exertion, recent or large occlusions, advanced syphilitic heart disease, subacute bacterial endocarditis, and active rheumatic carditis, do better at home under the care of the family physician. Patients who have mild angina, obesity, hypertension, and effort syndrome, as well as sufferers from peripheral vascular disorders, particularly of the spastic type, the coronary occlusion convalescents, and patients with inactive rheumatic disease and diminished cardiac reserve, may derive some benefit from a course of Spa treatment.

From the description so far, it is evident that much of the "cure" depends on the environment and the attendants and may be classed as psychic. Consequently, in the following attempt to sum up the benefits of the different forms of therapy, we must admit that there are many advantages that cannot be measured by the yardstick of science.

## HYDROTHERAPY

Hydrotherapy (Balneotherapy) is usually administered as a carbon-dioxide bath. This form of therapy in cardiovascular disease was originated at Bad Nauheim in Germany, and such favorable results have been reported that other centers have been established where naturally carbonated waters are available in large quantities. Well-known spas are located at Bath and Harrogate in England, Royat and Vichy in France, Bad Nauheim in Germany, and Saratoga Springs, Bedford Springs, Hot Springs, White Sulphur Springs, and Palm Springs in America.

The carbon-dioxide bath is prepared from mineral waters which emanate from the earth. When this water reaches the surface, great quantities of carbon dioxide escape, but the bath retains a high percentage of the gas in solution, a fact that can readily be demonstrated by observing the large amount of carbon-dioxide bubbles that cling to the bony surface of the patient immersed in the bath (Fig. 160). The amount of carbon dioxide in the water as it comes from the earth averages 0.7 to 1.4 Gm. per liter, although it is higher at some spas. Different springs at the same spa sometimes vary in their carbon-dioxide content. The water from these springs is always alkaline in reaction.

The temperature of the water as it issues from the earth should not be too high in order that enough carbon dioxide may be retained in solution. The ideal temperature has been found to be between 97° and 99° Fahrenheit.

heit. However, many resorts such as Royat have springs of varying temperature, permitting a wide choice in prescribing a natural bath to suit the needs of the individual patient.

The effect of hydrotherapy on the cardiac patient has recently been studied by a number of observers.<sup>70, 243</sup> The mechanical effects of the bath itself, the temperature at which it is given, and the chemical effects of the carbon dioxide on the bodily processes, locally and after absorption, are the main facts to be considered in an evaluation of this form of therapy.

It is a common observation that the skin of the patient in the carbon-dioxide bath becomes hyperemic up to the level of immersion. This is at-



FIG. 160. Bubbles of natural carbonic acid gas blanket the whole body in the baths (Courtesy, Dr. Walter S. McClellan, Saratoga Springs, New York.)

tributed by some to the direct vasodilating action of the carbon dioxide on the skin vessels. Consequently, during the first few minutes in the bath, the patient experiences a pleasing sensation of warmth even if the temperature of the water is below 99° F., and an immediate effect is reflected in the blood pressure. A gradual drop in the systolic as well as the diastolic levels occurs; the peak is reached in about ten minutes. In some patients a 30 to 40 mm. decrease in the systolic blood pressure is not unusual. If the patient stays in the bath, the pressure will be observed to rise again and will reach its initial level in about ten minutes. It is claimed that as the number of baths increases, there is a tendency for the pressure to remain at lower levels in certain groups of patients, and this is accompanied by an increase in the oscillometric index. However, we must always be careful in interpreting results in terms of the blood-pressure reading that is so easily influenced by a variety of psychic factors. The blood pressure would naturally tend to decrease in some cases in the atmosphere of the spa amid the pleasant surroundings and in the absence of disturbing contacts.

During immersion in the bath, the pulse rate drops, and according to

some observers an actual diminution in cardiac size may follow the treatment.

The pressure of the water of the bath may likewise aid in venous emptying. Intra-abdominal pressure may be increased by the weight of the water and this may augment the volume of venous blood returned to the right side of the heart. Kroetz and Waechter have shown that in the baths at Nauheim there is an increase in the minute volume output of the heart. The increase is greater in the carbon-dioxide bath than in the plain or fresh water baths. It is also claimed that the respiratory center is stimulated directly by the increased amount of carbon dioxide in the arterial blood during the carbon-dioxide bath. This may be caused by the increased amount of the gas absorbed from the skin and eliminated through the lungs, or carbon dioxide may be inhaled from the environment. In any event, the amount of carbon dioxide eliminated by the lungs during and following the bath increases.<sup>201</sup> Moreover, the oxygen consumption appears to be only slightly greater, certainly not to the extent that would indicate that the carbon dioxide comes from the oxidative changes of metabolism.

In spite of these studies, the exact mechanism of the action of the carbon dioxide remains unsettled. The observers who support the theory of local action claim that the whole effect of the bath results from the stimulation of the cutaneous nerve endings. Marked vasodilatation occurs, the reflexes cause slower heart action. The repetition of the baths accounts for the good effect in certain spastic arterial diseases of the extremities. The proponents of the absorption theory claim that the gas enters the body in solution and acts on the organism as a whole, increasing respiration by action on the respiratory center in the medulla. The excess carbon dioxide in the mineral water causes peripheral dilatation, and this again allows more carbon dioxide to pass through the skin. Some observers carry the theory a step further. They claim that the carbon dioxide acts as a sedative for vaso-sympathetic excitability, and that it stimulates nutrition by improving the basal metabolism and helping in the excretion of toxic products. In their opinion this explains the beneficial effect in hypertension. A diuretic action has been said to be another good effect brought about by the carbon-dioxide bath through its increase in the basal metabolic rate.

The improvement in the morale may explain the good results that follow spa treatment in many of the coronary cases, particularly in the patients who have mild degrees of angina. Many angina cases, especially if hypertension is present, are apt to show periods of temporary improvement under any new forms of therapy. A study of the electrocardiogram before and after the usual regime of spa treatment in 107 cases is offered as evidence of improvement by Comstock and his associates.<sup>70</sup> However, it must be realized that in no condition is the electrocardiogram subject to so much variation as in coronary disease, particularly in patients recovering from minor occlusions.

Considering the various effects of the carbon-dioxide baths that I have outlined, both real and theoretical, the first indication for this type of treat-

ment seems to be certain forms of hypertension where the secondary changes have not been too widespread or rapid, but where the symptoms have been persistent and annoying. Whether or not we believe the claims made for carbon-dioxide baths, any therapy that proves useful in calming the dangerous crises encountered in the hypertensive group and allows periods of relief to punctuate the course of a disease acknowledged to be chronic, should be used even though we cannot analyze every phase of its action. I do not believe that the effect of the carbon-dioxide baths is at all lasting in the majority of cases of established essential hypertension, but I do believe that their use, combined with other measures at the spa, is far better treatment for this group of patients than any other system of therapy in the absence of symptoms of cardiac failure.

While it is unfortunate that the result of the carbon-dioxide baths is regarded in terms of so many millimeters of fall in the blood pressure by both patient and physician, on the other hand, observations of the blood pressure are a great advantage in selecting cases. The patients who show a moderate drop in blood pressure, accompanied by a feeling of well-being after the first carbon-dioxide bath, are usually the ones who will show the most benefit from a series of these treatments. If the blood pressure seeks its former level when the patient returns home, however, he should not be discouraged, for this does not indicate that the stay at the spa has been in vain. If the onward march to ultimate cardiac failure has been at all delayed by the rest program that accompanies the treatment, much can be said in favor of the spa. Likewise, if the cardiac patient returns from the spa with his mode of living adjusted to a more moderate level, he should not worry about his blood pressure readings. He should realize that many of his annoying disturbances such as vertigo, headaches, and flushes have been at least temporarily benefited by the treatment.

The spa regime should prove of great value to the obese hypertensive who has the "ruddy glow of health," since it combines dietary regulation with hydrotherapy and the proper prescription of exercise. Careful attention to every detail often makes it possible for the spa physician to uncover and treat successfully some secondary condition; this in the long run reacts favorably on the hypertension. The thin hypertensive patient who is subject to vascular spasms obtains relief because of quiet environment and the dilating effect of the carbon-dioxide baths. Much benefit likewise results in all groups of patients when they learn that they can live without having blood-pressure readings taken several times a day.

I heartily disagree with the claim that reduction of the blood pressure in the presence of aortic insufficiency is a benefit to be derived from the "CO<sub>2</sub> cure." This form of hypertension is a compensatory mechanism and in itself is certainly no indication for therapy. Likewise, the hypertension associated with an advanced renal lesion and early renal decompensation is not the type that is amenable to vigorous spa treatment. When carbon dioxide baths are said to have ameliorated the renal lesion, eliminating the albuminuria and decreasing the blood-pressure level and nitrogen re-

tention, I always wonder what the patient's course would have been without the special therapy, since renal lesions many times display quiescent periods.

The sedative action of the carbon-dioxide baths may be counted on to help patients with overactive sympathetic nervous systems, particularly those who show little if any basic cardiac damage and who are constantly plagued by frequent premature beats. The same may be said of patients suffering from frequent paroxysms of tachycardia where the usual drug therapy is either poorly tolerated or ineffective in preventing recurrence of the seizures. Patients with the tachycardia of mild hyperthyroidism may "take the cure" if financially able. Surgery, however, offers the poorer patient a much quicker return to health. Physiotherapy is contraindicated in advanced hyperthyroid states with cardiac signs and symptoms. However, during convalescence following surgical treatment, physiotherapy may be useful.

To give the reader an idea of the number, temperature and types of baths administered, the following case histories from a recent article by McClellan,<sup>211\*</sup> showing the course of hydrotherapeutic treatment advised in each instance at Saratoga Springs, are included.

### ILLUSTRATIVE CASES

**Case 106.** H. M., male, age 75, was referred by his physician to Saratoga on April 9, 1935. Some dyspnea on moderate exertion and claudication in the lower extremities on walking short distances were present for some years.

**PHYSICAL EXAMINATION.** The patient was above the average height, thin and distinctly nervous. It was difficult for him to sit still during the examination. There was arcus senilis and slight pulsation of the larger vessels of the neck. His heart was slightly enlarged to percussion and the pulse rate was 95. There were numerous premature beats occurring at irregular intervals. The blood pressure was 152 systolic and 90 diastolic. The radial arteries were palpable and not easily compressed. The lungs were clear. Abdominal examination was essentially negative. In the extremities, the reflexes were present and weak pulsations could be detected in both dorsalis pedis arteries. There was slight pitting edema about the ankles.

**CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS.** A. Etiologic: Arteriosclerosis. B. Anatomic: Cardiac enlargement. C. Physiologic: Premature ventricular contractions. D. Functional Classification: Class 3.

**COURSE OF TREATMENT.** The following table presents in detail the temperature, duration and position of the patient in the bath, as well as a record of his pulse before, during and after each bath.

| DATE    | BATH PRESCRIPTION |                     |                                              | BEFORE | PULSE  |       |
|---------|-------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------------------|--------|--------|-------|
|         | TEMPERATURE<br>F° | DURATION<br>MINUTES | FULL, $\frac{1}{4}$ OR<br>$\frac{1}{2}$ BATH |        | DURING | AFTER |
| April 9 | 95                | 8                   | $\frac{1}{2}$                                | 90     | 88     | 85    |
| 10      | 95                | 9                   | "                                            | 85     | 81     | 83    |
| 12      | 95                | 10                  | "                                            | 85     | 82     | 80    |
| 13      | 94                | 10                  | "                                            | 84     | 82     | 80    |
| 15      | 94                | 10                  | "                                            | 84     | 81     | 78    |
| 16      | 94                | 10                  | "                                            | 85     | 80     | 78    |
| 17      | 94                | 10                  | "                                            | 83     | 79     | 77    |

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| DATE     | TEMPERATURE<br>1° | BATH PRESCRIPTION   |                          | BEFORE | PULSE  |       |
|----------|-------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|--------|--------|-------|
|          |                   | DURATION<br>MINUTES | 1011, 3/4 OR<br>3/2 BATH |        | DURING | AFTER |
| April    |                   |                     |                          |        |        |       |
| 22 ..... | 94                | 10                  | Full                     | 73     | 78     | 78    |
| 23 ..... | 94                | 10                  | "                        | 77     | 77     | 78    |
| 24 ..... | 94                | 11                  | "                        | 78     | 76     | 77    |
| 26 ..... | 94                | 12                  | "                        | 77     | 76     | 77    |
| 27 ..... | 94                | 12                  | "                        | 78     | 77     | 76    |
| 29 ..... | 94                | 12                  | "                        | 78     | 76     | 75    |
| 30 ..... | 94                | 12                  | "                        | 79     | 75     | 74    |
| May      |                   |                     |                          |        |        |       |
| 2 .....  | 94                | 12                  | "                        | 78     | 74     | 78    |
| 3 .....  | 93                | 12                  | "                        | 78     | 75     | 77    |
| 4 .....  | 93                | 12                  | "                        | 78     | 74     | 76    |
| 6 .....  | 93                | 12                  | "                        | 77     | 75     | 74    |
| 7 .....  | 93                | 12                  | "                        | 76     | 74     | 75    |
| 9 .....  | 93                | 12                  | "                        | 75     | 74     | .     |
| 10 ..... | 93                | 12                  | "                        | 74     | 73     | 76    |

PROGRESS NOTES. April sixteenth. The patient while still nervous has less edema about the ankles. He states that pain in the legs is less severe. The heart rate is 85 and frequent premature beats are still present.

April 23. Symptomatic improvement is evident and the patient states that he can walk with less dyspnea and pain than at the beginning of his treatment.

May 2. There is still very slight edema at the ankles. The pulse rate is 78 with the irregularity persistent.

May 10. Pulse rate is 74. He states that he feels distinctly better. There is no edema of the ankles although the cardiac irregularity still persists. He is able to walk approximately one mile without the production of pain in the lower extremities.

May 16. A letter from his physician written after his return states that both objectively and subjectively this patient is much improved and he is advised to repeat the course of treatment at the end of six months.

**Discussion.** This patient's history is typical of the gradual progress of a widespread arteriosclerosis. The pain in the lower extremities was apparently an expression of diminished blood supply caused by the general arterial disease. We do not expect that a patient of this type will show any decrease in the amount of arterial change or that the progress of the condition will be arrested. The treatment, however, is of value in improving the circulation by making full use of the blood channels which are still available. This type of patient does well on courses of treatment once or twice a year in order that the improvement noted above may be maintained. The additional rest periods procured by visits to the spa likewise contribute in no small measure to the symptomatic relief obtained.

Case 107. R. G., male, 46, was referred to Saratoga on July 22, 1935, by his physician, who wrote that this man had been able to carry on his work in his usual manner until the past April, when he had experienced a sudden sharp pain in the precordial region, which had been sufficient to require bed rest. The first attack of pain occurred in April, 1935, and had been followed by a second attack on May 9, 1935. The clinical examination and electrocardiographic tracing supported the diagnosis of coronary occlusion. The physician stated that since the attack, the patient had been at home and unable to perform any work, although he had been up and about the house for the past six weeks and able to walk one or two blocks.

The examination at Saratoga showed a well-developed and well-nourished middle

aged man. Heart rate 78, regular, both sounds distinct and no murmurs. Blood pressure 132/80.

CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS. A. Etiological: Arteriosclerosis B. Anatomical: Coronary sclerosis and old occlusions. C. Physiological: Normal sinus rhythm. D. Functional Classification. Class 3.

TREATMENT. The patient took the course of carbon dioxide mineral water baths shown in the following table.

PROGRESS NOTES. It will be noted that after the first bath there was an elevation in the rate of the pulse, which may be accounted for by the nervous reaction following a new type of treatment.

| DATE   | TEMPERATURE<br>F° | BATH PRESCRIPTION   |                                              | REST  | PULSE  |       |
|--------|-------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------------------|-------|--------|-------|
|        |                   | DURATION<br>MINUTES | FULL, $\frac{3}{4}$ OR<br>$\frac{1}{2}$ BATH |       | BEFORE | AFTER |
| July   |                   |                     |                                              |       |        |       |
| 22     | 93                | 8                   | $\frac{1}{2}$                                | 1 hr. | 72     | 86    |
| 24     | 93                | 9                   | "                                            | "     | 66     | 64    |
| 27     | 93                | 10                  | "                                            | "     | 72     | 60    |
| 29     | 93                | 10                  | "                                            | "     | 70     | 63    |
| 31     | 92                | 10                  | "                                            | "     | 80     | 63    |
| August |                   |                     |                                              |       |        |       |
| 1      | 92                | 10                  | Full                                         | "     | 72     | 63    |
| 3      | 92                | 11                  | "                                            | "     | 72     | 60    |
| 5      | 91                | 11                  | "                                            | "     | 72     | 66    |
| 7      | 91                | 11                  | "                                            | "     | 72     | 62    |
| 8      | 91                | 12                  | "                                            | "     | 72     | 70    |
| 10     | 91                | 12                  | "                                            | "     | 80     | 72    |
| 12     | 91                | 11                  | "                                            | "     | 72     | 72    |
| 14     | 90                | 11                  | "                                            | "     | 72     | 64    |
| 15     | 90                | 12                  | "                                            | "     | 72     | 72    |
| 17     | 90                | 12                  | "                                            | "     | 72     | 72    |

August 1. Patient states that he is able to walk five blocks without the production of any pain at the present time. He is anxious to take up his work and it is difficult for him to follow a course of complete rest at home.

August 17. The patient feels that he has distinctly gained in strength and is now doing light work around his home, such as caring for the lawn and some light carpenter work. His pulse rate is steady at 72, good quality, and his blood pressure is normal.

Discussion. This patient undoubtedly had a good result following the period of spa treatment. He is a typical example of the problem presented by the active business man convalescing from a coronary occlusion who experiences anginal attacks when first allowed to be out of bed. The period of training the patient procured at the spa, including the CO<sub>2</sub> baths, was far more effectual in bringing about his return to work than drug therapy.

There are additional features offered by the spa treatment that in my opinion far outweigh the value of the waters. In this instance the spa was useful when placed between hospital and home. At the spa, this patient acquired the proper philosophy toward restricted living which an immediate return to the home and business would not have permitted. He was given a good chance at the spa to become acquainted with his myocardial reserve, and he did this with better grace when placed in the company of those similarly incapacitated. The baths were prescribed, but the routine rest periods that followed the treatments gave them their greatest value.

Not the least of the benefits that some patients have shown following their visits to European Spas has been derived from the voyage over and back, two enforced periods of physical and mental rest.

## MASSAGE

Massage is another valuable measure that is commonly overlooked in the management of the cardiac patient. The layman has always been awake to the value of this form of physiotherapy, but as the physicians grew in scientific knowledge, massage was unfortunately entrusted to others. Continued neglect and lack of proper supervision gave opportunity for the rise of the various "cults." These less informed enthusiasts have gained in confidence and boldness until they claim to be able to cure almost any disease by massage.

Massage has been shown to produce immediately dilatation of the capillaries, the duration of which depends on the amount of pressure used.<sup>282</sup> This effect can be observed by the direct inspection of the capillary bed with the microscope. In addition, the red blood-cell count is increased by forcing inactive cells into the circulation from resting areas. Light massage can be useful even in cases of mild cardiac failure since it aids the return of venous blood and, in long periods of inactivity, makes up for the lack of the force supplied by contraction of the leg muscles. Massage properly carried out, therefore, is an aid in preserving some degree of muscular tone and vigor.

Massage is particularly valuable if given following the application of heat. This principle is used in the Vichy douche, where the entire skin area is sprayed by showers of different temperatures and then massaged. After all these treatments, whether local or general, the cardiac patient should rest, since the procedure is usually followed by a sense of fatigue. In severe congestive failure with a high degree of venous engorgement, massage is contraindicated. It is likewise good policy to defer its use in the presence of fever, acute endocarditis or acute myocarditis.

## HELIOOTHERAPY

Many of the spas have special rooms fitted with equipment for combining the effect of ultraviolet light with other forms of therapy. In America the quartz lamp has invaded the hospital, the athletic club, the sanatorium, the physician's office, and lately the private home. Much benefit is claimed from its use in various forms of heart disease, including angina. At present the subject is in a very unsettled state, and further investigations are needed before definite conclusions can be made. It may be a great aid in the treatment of children with rheumatic carditis (Fig. 161), as we have long known that this disease flourishes in the crowded slum areas of the large cities where there is lack of sunlight, and shows

decreasing incidence in the warmer climates of the South where the amount of sunlight is greater.



FIG. 161. Heliotherapy. (Courtesy Children's Heart Hospital, Philadelphia)

### ELECTROTHERAPY

The value of the various electrotherapeutic procedures in the treatment of cardiovascular disease is still unsettled. Further studies are essential to

support the claims that have been made for diathermy, high frequency, static, sinusoidal, galvanic, and faradic currents. Autocondensation and diathermy are most popular in the treatment of hypertension. Diathermy undoubtedly has some place in the treatment of cardiovascular conditions where heat relieves the symptoms. The greatest benefit follows its use in arterial diseases of the spastic type and intermittent claudication. The treatments likewise have some temporary effect in relieving symptoms of other conditions. In coronary disease accompanied by angina, if the element of spasm predominates, diathermy may be helpful by producing vasodilation and increasing coronary flow. Some cases are reported where more lasting benefits have resulted than followed the use of the nitrite drugs. In these instances the short-wave diathermy has been thought to produce its good effect by a temporary paralysis of the sympathetic nerve pathways. However, in all these cases the psychic element is difficult to rule out.

**Hyperpyrexia.** The production of hyperthermia or hyperpyrexia by the use of the Kettering or similar apparatus has been followed by encouraging results in some cases of infection of the heart. Cures have been reported occasionally in acute gonococcal endocarditis (page 189), and here the use of the method seems to be a rational one since it is quite possible to produce temperatures in the human body that the gonococcus cannot withstand.

In chorea the use of the Kettering apparatus has many advantages. Although great care should always be taken in the presence of an active carditis in recommending this form of therapy for children, recent successes that have been reported are most encouraging. It must be remembered that artificial fever is different from fever of toxic origin; it is produced by electromagnetic induction and is not a fever in the ordinary sense but a heating of the body, a hyperpyrexia. Neymann<sup>278</sup> reports excellent results in a series of 25 cases of Sydenham's chorea. In all cases the choreiform movements stopped following the treatments. Similar results have since been reported by other investigators. Neymann recommends that the treatments be given bi-weekly, and that the temperature at each treatment should be maintained between 39.7° C. (103.5° F.) and 40.6° C. (105° F.) for eight hours. After treatment the cardiac rate is increased and the T-waves may be flattened, but these changes disappear in 24 hours. This form of therapy is not beneficial in all forms of chronic carditis, and is not to be recommended for general use.

## OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

The proper form of occupational therapy can only be prescribed when a complete diagnosis of the patient is at hand and the functional classification determined; consequently it is one of the final considerations in treatment. Patients placed in Functional Group 4 can handle only the types of occupational therapy that can be carried out at bed rest. Pa-

tients convalescing from repeated attacks of congestive failure and the rheumatic groups with cardiac infection make up this category. Although these cases are allowed very little exertion, the mental rest that follows interest in some task that can be carried out for a few hours each day is a considerable aid to children and adults alike. If improvement permits advancement to Group 3, and finally to Groups 2 and 1, the value of occupational therapy as a future means of earning a livelihood becomes important. Some form of physiotherapy that is begun to interest the patient for a few hours a day may ultimately prove to be

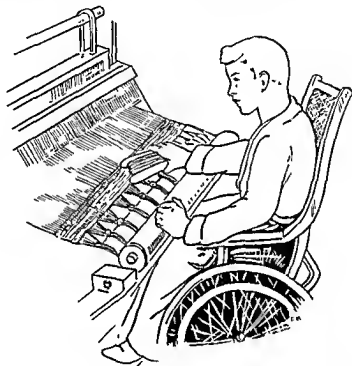


FIG. 162. Occupational therapy.

an excellent source of income. Less financial worry often results, and this is reflected in the health of the patient. I recall an insurance salesman of 52 who came into the hospital on two occasions following attacks of coronary occlusion. He showed such limitation of cardiac reserve after the second attack that he was forced to give up his work. He became much interested in the manufacture of sets of picture puzzles, then at the height of their popularity. When he left the hospital after two months, he was improved but was still in Class 3. However, he already had ideas for enlarging the business, and with the help of his wife and daughter, who made up his sales force, he was soon able almost to equal his former income. This patient had an excellent outlook, did not talk about his condition any more than it was necessary at the time of the visits of his

physician, and never had time to realize that he was a chronic invalid. He learned how to use his hands in a new occupation that allowed him to spare his heart. Many other cases where the morale of the patient has been improved through the use of occupational therapy could be cited (chapter 23).

For Class 3 and 4 patients confined to bed, various ingenious devices have been arranged to permit tasks requiring the use of the fingers only. Light bed boards may be used, or in some cases, where weaving is carried out, the apparatus can be suspended over the bed (Fig. 162). Prolonged hospitalization permits training for occupations which require extensive apparatus, while patients who come in for shorter periods may be assigned to simpler tasks like basketry, cord and leather work. Women patients may, in addition to any of these types of occupational therapy, renew their interest in different forms of needlework.

Even in shorter illnesses, the psychotherapeutic value of some slight task assigned cannot be overlooked. The patient may be inclined to worry about his condition, the new surroundings may delay his convalescence, hence attempts should be made to interest him in some occupation as soon as his physical state permits. In this way prolonged hospitalization may be prevented, needed articles may be produced for the supply room (folded surgical dressings, sponges, etc.), and the patient's morale may be kept at a high level.

## THE PRESCRIPTION OF EXERCISE

"The wise for cure on exercise depend."

—DRYDEN, *Epistle to John Dryden*, 1:94.

Exercise plays an important role in the management of the cardiac patient. Unfortunately rest has been emphasized so much that patients are instinctively afraid of exercise, and for this reason physicians are apt to prescribe exercise cautiously and vaguely, if at all. The prescription of exercise should present little difficulty if the physical examination has been made with care and the functional capacity determined. The advice given to cardiac patients regarding their activities is based on this data as well as on the principles underlying the physiology of exercise.

Energy for exercise is furnished by ingested food. From a resting level when the requirements may be but one calorie per minute to the exercise level when the requirement may be ten times as great, it can be seen that the resources of the body must be drawn upon to supply the energy as it is needed. Analysis of the urine after the most severe exercise shows such a small amount of extra nitrogen that we know that the protein stores have been but little depleted. Intelligently arranged training tables for athletes, therefore, are not any longer overburdened with meat and other nitrogen-containing foods, since the energy for muscular contraction is more quickly derived from the breakdown of substances that are non-nitrogenous. This is shown by a study of the oxygen absorbed and the carbon dioxide eliminated (respiratory quotient). The carbohydrates of the food furnish most of the motive power for muscular exertion. Consequently athletes are now encouraged to eat candy before engaging in severe muscular activity.

As a result of muscular contraction there is an accumulation of lactic acid which disappears rapidly in the presence of oxygen. The chemical changes in the blood accompanying exercise are responsible for stimulation of the respiratory center. There is likewise increase in the pulmonary blood flow proportional to the increase in ventilation, a rise in the output of the heart per minute and an accelerated heart rate. The size of the heart of the normal athlete who is well trained is unchanged after severe exertion, but the blood pressure shows a temporary increase. This is more pronounced in the athlete because of the psychic factors of competition, and is brought about by the constriction of the splanchnic area. It permits widening of the capillary beds in the heart and skeletal muscles and aids in the quick diffusion of oxygen to essential areas.

Although the presence of oxygen is not necessary for contraction of the



muscles, it is most essential for their recovery. A person can perform a given task without the necessary amount of oxygen being present for its full accomplishment. For example, he can hold his breath and climb a steep grade or lift a heavy weight, but to do this the tissues go in debt for oxygen. Our ability to proceed with the tasks requiring the sudden expenditure of energy without the appearance of symptoms depends upon this physiologic fact. The debt of oxygen is paid back by a continued elevation of the respiratory rate following exertion for a longer or shorter recovery period until the balance is restored.

The training of an athlete to accomplish a task with increasing efficiency and skill depends on daily practice. This eliminates awkwardness and unnecessary movements and lessens the amount of oxygen needed each time. The size of the skeletal muscles precipitating in the particular task is increased, and the bodily processes of taking in the oxygen (respiration) and distribution of the oxygen (circulation) become better regulated and adapted. The vital capacity increases as training progresses. Consequently graded exercise may build up a reserve that enables the ultimate performance of a task to be accomplished with few, if any, distressing symptoms. In a similar manner the cardiac patient can train his depleted reserve to perform more efficiently within narrower limits. Therefore, in neglecting to furnish the proper prescription of exercise, the physician is not making use of all possible aids to recovery.

Restriction of activity on inadequate grounds will consequently do more harm than overlooking a slight organic lesion and permitting full activity. The mental effect of telling the patient that he has a "heart murmur" is tremendous, particularly if it is followed by vague advice to "take things easy for a while" (chapter 13). A fear may develop toward all forms of activity, and the subsequent lack of exercise soon reflects itself in a poor physical state. Therefore it is most essential that the physician be fully acquainted with the physical condition of the patient before prescribing or prohibiting exercise.

Let us consider first the types of heart disease where bed rest for prolonged periods is required. In this group we include patients with congestive failure, recent coronary occlusions, and active cardiac infections. *Even in these instances active exercise in all forms is not contraindicated beyond a few weeks.* In exceptional cases even before this period has expired, some forms of exercise may be definitely indicated to encourage the patient and keep up his morale. Nurses trained in the care of cardiac patients are valuable at this time. They help to take the patient's mind away from his condition and interest him in some form of exercise even if it consists only in moving the fingers in arranging cards or in making small articles. Gentle massage may be started almost at once in many patients, and this may be followed by passive movements. If no ill effects are noted, greater freedom may be allowed. The Schott resistance exercises, if properly carried out, are often valuable in beginning the rehabilitation.

When to allow the patient out of bed is a decision that rests on the facts of each case. Experimental evidence demands that the rest period for the patient following an acute coronary occlusion should be not less than six weeks. However, patients who show good recovery from congestive failure may be permitted to be out of bed much sooner. When edema disappears and the appetite improves, it is often good policy to allow a little freedom as early as the end of the first week. It has been demonstrated many times that nothing is to be gained by unduly prolonged bed rest, particularly in cardiac patients at or beyond middle life. Furthermore, many complications are encouraged by an extended period of inactivity in elderly individuals.

Walking is the next exercise that may be prescribed for this group, the amount depending on the effect of the initial allowance on edema, chest pain, pulse, and respiration. In the patient who has angina, the increase in the exercise allowance should be gradual. If chest pain is absent, the prescription may be slowly and cautiously increased, for it is likely that no harm is being done.

The same rule governs the first time the convalescing cardiac patient goes down stairs or out-of-doors. It is not harmful to descend a stairway, for this in itself is a form of self-administered resistance exercise and in addition may help to restore the sense of balance after a period of bed rest. The return trip, however, should be taken slowly. "One step at a time" is trite advice, but it still holds.

In prescribing the first walks outdoors, tell the patient in definite terms how far he is to go. The importance of graded walks at this stage of convalescence has long been recognized and is part of any well-planned spa regime. The most elaborate of the systems is the one proposed by Stokes and Oertel, consisting of a series of carefully laid out walks, the first covering a distance of  $1/12$  of a mile. While walking this distance, the patient lifts his weight up a 3 per cent grade. If the response is good, the grade is gradually increased, and over the course of some weeks the patient will be able to cover a distance of two miles comfortably with the grade advanced to 15 per cent. An elaborate course for this system of exercise was laid out some years ago at Hot Springs, Arkansas. Foot paths, appropriately labelled by stone markers of varied hue, lead the convalescent through scenes of natural beauty. They are graded from almost level to very steep. A truly American adaptation of the Oertel system may be found at Saratoga Springs, where the patient takes his daily amount of prescribed walking through a carefully planned golf course.

In obese patients this system of exercise is very valuable when combined with the proper dietary regime. Over the course of eight-weeks' treatment by diet and walks, considerable improvement in exercise tolerance can be noted. The more drastic forms of Swedish exercise, carried out with the aid of gymnasium equipment, are less popular today, but they are still useful when carefully prescribed. The stationary bicycle and the rowing machine in the city gymnasiums and clubs furnish satisfactory forms

of indoor exercise for the winter months. Intelligent supervision is much more important, however, than the type of exercise. The response of the patient to each added burden is the essential factor, for this suggests the amount to be added or subtracted from the next day's exercise prescription.

Less fortunate patients who cannot take spa "cures" may nevertheless derive benefits from walks if the physician will take the time to plan them. Familiarity with the neighborhood of the patient's home or hospital will make this exercise prescription possible. In addition to keeping alive the patient's interest in his treatment and progress, the physician's notations concerning these exercise prescriptions show the functional capacity, and when considered as a whole they are invaluable in estimating the effect of therapy as well as the ultimate prognosis in each case.

Before planning suitable exercise for an ambulatory cardiac patient, a knowledge of the occupation and temperament is essential. I have never advised the so-called "setting-up exercises," for they are tiresome in most instances and after the first few attempts are usually abandoned. The ideal forms of exercise for cardiac patients are the intermittent and non-competitive types. Golf, for example, is excellent if the patient's tastes run in this direction, and a prescription of nine holes will be easy to accept. This takes the patient outdoors, away from business, and adds the effect of heliotherapy; for this reason, it is far better than a gymnasium. Furthermore, if the patient is interested, the golf is more apt to be continued. Golf should not be attempted by those who are not interested in it, or where competition cannot be avoided, or if emotional strain is increased.

The physician of today should have a fair knowledge of the different types of out-of-door activities if he is to prescribe these forms of exercise successfully. Tennis and similar competitive games should not be allowed. Croquet and other lawn games may be suitable as far as exercise goes but may be unfit as far as the personality of the patient is concerned. Swimming, if properly supervised, is suitable in a number of cases. The convalescing cardiac patient will usually prefer to take his allowance of exercise in the morning hours, for then it does not interfere with sleep. Wakeful nights are more apt to follow exercise periods taken at the end of the day.

The ambulatory patient seen at the dispensary will have neither time nor money to follow any special program for exercise. The question of exercise in these instances may be considered in relation to the usual type of work. Cardiac patients are happier when permitted to return to work as soon as possible. Exercise should be planned with this in view, but before the schedule is made out, the physician must have an understanding of the type and amount of exertion which the patient's daily work entails. While lighter factory work may be permitted, heavy laboring jobs are out of the question, and here the great problem arises. In days before the depression when opportunities for new positions were more plentiful, the problem was usually settled satisfactorily by the Social

dren suffering from similar limitations, progress may be more satisfactory. The children in these special groups or schools are taught to avoid haste in all things, and a philosophy of living under a constant restriction of exercise is acquired. Even when exercise has to be curtailed for long periods because of the recurrence of rheumatic infection, education is still carried on in these special schools. In this way the patient is prepared to fill a position in life that will not overtax a decreased cardiac reserve (page 131).

## THE HEART IN ATHLETICS

Nearly a century ago, at the beginning of the modern era of collegiate athletics, James Hope, in a book entitled "Diseases of the Heart and Great Vessels," expressed the opinion that boat-racing at Oxford and Cambridge and violent gymnastics have caused

rupture and inflammation of the aortic valves and aorta, issuing in incurable organic disease.

He further stated:

I have also known pedestrian tours among the Swiss and Scotch mountains to be followed by hypertrophy and other diseases of the heart. It is protracted efforts that are always most pernicious. Feats of this kind should always be discouraged.<sup>161</sup>

A similar stand was taken by Peacock, in 1864, when he claimed that cardiac hypertrophy and subsequent failure among Cornish miners resulted solely from overwork. In 1870, Clifford Allbutt claimed that long-continued exertion caused right heart failure and dilatation; and that sudden strains were productive of wear and tear in the aortic area. In 1888, Roy and Adami's experimental work seemed to lend support to these claims, and chronic thickening of the cardiac valves due to strain was described at length in their book. Adami, in 1911, stated that he believed the nodose arteritis seen in elderly subjects was associated with thickening of the valve leaflets; both, in his opinion, resulted from mechanical strain. In 1898 and 1909, Allbutt retrenched enough to admit that the influence of the toxic and infective factors was difficult to eliminate in these cases, and sounded the first modern note in his conclusion that the importance of muscular effort as a factor in cardiac injury has been much exaggerated.

However, for years there were no dissenting opinions. Reviewing the literature up to 1915, we find the old idea re-echoed many times. Bardeen<sup>19</sup> in 1915 stated:

All college students taking part in major sports have hypertrophied hearts. While in many cases the compensation is good, in a large number there is myocardial irritability sometimes accompanied by mitral murmurs which indicate somewhat serious lesions.

For the past 25 years, with a few exceptions, little attention has been given to the subject in American and English literature. An extensive continental literature is available, but it contains many conflicting opinions. Consequently the subject of the heart and athletics remains rather hazy in the minds of many. The prescription of exercise for damaged and undamaged hearts shows a surprising lack of uniformity in the various university centers, and the functional systolic murmur continues to consign good athletes to the side lines. In these cases, even in the absence of hypertrophy or any supporting sign, cardiac involvement is suspected, and even the mildest forms of exercise may be prescribed with hesitation and uncertainty.

The sustained interest of both sexes in all forms of athletic activity places the question of the heart in its relation to competitive sport squarely before the health services of our universities. Curiously enough, the rising tide of interest in sports and their effect on the heart has been paralleled by revolutionary changes in our concepts of diseases of the circulatory system. With Mackenzie and Lewis as leaders, a newer cardiology has sprung up in which valve lesion and murmur are now relegated to the background and the heart muscle assumes major importance. We have reached the time when the older idea, especially the erroneous assumption that "the athletic heart" is a clinical entity, must be discarded, and our judgments must rest on the sounder foundations of these newer concepts.

To begin with, let us consider the normal heart of an athlete at the end of a hard race. We look first at the clinical picture. We see the runner gasping for breath, we note his pale, pinched expression and weak, rapid pulse. He perspires freely from a cold body. If the exhaustion is more severe, we may see him lying on his side, occasionally doubled up, complaining of abdominal pain. There may be nausea, even vomiting, and sometimes unconsciousness. Is this the picture that we describe as heart strain? If we pause and analyze the symptoms, we find very little evidence that the circulatory system is at fault, and we are forced to conclude that the term "heart strain" is a much misused expression. When the term "strain" is used in connection with a skeletal muscle, I understand a stretching or tearing of the muscle where it meets its tendon or of the tendon itself. I can even visualize the rupture of a few strands of muscle with subsequent soreness and stiffness at the site, but this same injury does not occur in the musculature of the heart. Nature protects so vital a structure from injury that is so easily produced. Moreover, such an injury has never been seen postmortem in healthy hearts. We do meet rare cases of rupture of the wall of the heart, but rupture does not occur unless the area is the site of an infarct resulting from a previous coronary occlusion. Authentic cases of spontaneous rupture of the healthy heart have never been reported. Barth has collected 24 instances of spontaneous rupture of the heart, and in every instance the seat of the lesion was in the left ventricle, where the heart wall is usually the thickest. So we

conclude that the rupture occurred through a degenerated, most likely infarcted, area.

Likewise, rupture of a healthy heart valve occurs rarely, if ever, and cannot be produced by severe exertion or "strain." When it does occur, the valve has been previously weakened by disease. Take a section of healthy aorta with its semilunar valves in place, and raise the pressure to the breaking point. You will see the slender, thin aortic valve leaflets hold fast while the thicker aortic wall will stretch, split, and then give way. If similar experiments are tried upon the healthy mitral and tricuspid valves, the artificially increased pressure leads to stretching and regurgitation through the valve orifice rather than rupture of the tough valvular tissues. We may safely conclude from this evidence that severe, sudden exertion in the athlete will not produce "strain" or muscle injury to the heart, such as we see in the skeletal muscles, nor will it damage or rupture the valvular leaflets.

Even the sudden death of an athlete at the finishing line (an extremely rare event) is not necessarily caused by the heart. It may conceivably occur from an overlooked persistent thymus or may be brought about by the mechanism of vagal inhibition. If the day is excessively warm and the race closely contested, the possibility of heat stroke or exhaustion must be kept in mind. May there not exist, also, under these dramatic circumstances, a condition closely akin to surgical shock? The psychic strain is certainly tremendous, particularly in the much advertised stars, before and during a hard race, and is it not possible that the nervous system may be at fault and not the cardiovascular? Surgeons are notably "heart conscious," and in my experience they are inclined to blame on the heart all sudden deaths during or just after operations. Here, too, the effect of the nervous system, the ductless glands, and other factors producing shock are often overlooked. The toxins of infection may leave in their wake not so much direct cardiac disability as a distinct loss of tone in the vasomotor system. It is the latter condition that slows down the athlete. Earlier exhaustion is noted many times in students when they have been permitted to resume activities too soon after recent infections like influenza.

Acute cardiac dilatation is the most popular diagnosis advanced to account for symptoms observed in the athlete at the end of the race. Indeed, this diagnosis has enjoyed widespread popularity, mainly because accurate methods of investigation have not been used. Reports have been based on the percussion of the hearts of athletes, a most unreliable method, especially in heavy-set, well-developed men. Percussion usually gives a larger cardiac outline than the roentgen ray, and this may be the main reason why the heart of the athlete has for many decades been wrongly suspected of showing hypertrophy caused by exercise. Orthodiascopy is a better method to determine cardiac size of athletes, and when carefully performed is cheaper and better suited to the need of a university health service.

Immediate examination of the hearts of athletes with the roentgen ray as they fall exhausted over the finish line shows a heart shadow which is not that of acute cardiac dilatation; in most instances the shadow is actually smaller than the normal. Richards,<sup>212</sup> and later Gordon,<sup>136</sup> by a series of pictures on marathon runners showed that all hearts are smaller immediately after the race and return to normal size during the course of a day. Experimental studies on animals which have been properly carried out and controlled seem to show a smaller heart when the point of exhaustion is reached. So we must abandon the term acute cardiac dilatation when referring to the cause of exhaustion in athletes with normal hearts. Even without the experimental proof which I have mentioned, the idea should appeal to us as being anatomically unsound. The heart is limited in its power to dilate, especially if the process is acute, by the tough fibers of the pericardial sac. If we perform Muller's experiment under the fluoroscope, we can see the heart dilate to the limit of its pericardial restraint and assume normal size as soon as the experiment is discontinued; if healthy, it is none the worse for the experience.

The cause of the smaller heart size observed in the athlete after sudden exertion taxes our power of speculation. The skeletal muscle, when subjected to overuse, shows cramp and stiffness because of diminution in blood supply. The overaction with the attending imperfect oxidation gives a swelling of the skeletal muscle fibers with tension of the sheaths. Later there develops the painful stiffness so commonly met in those unaccustomed to exercise. We cannot conceive of this phenomenon occurring in the healthy heart. It is a vital organ, necessary for the survival of the organism, constantly beating with relatively short rest periods and with a more abundant circulation. It is tempting to explain the smaller size of the healthy heart after severe exertion by an excess of lactic acid, but this has not been proved.

Lewis<sup>228</sup> has come to the conclusion

that the burdens imposed by physiological acts upon the normal heart, however heavy these burdens may be, never injure the heart fibers, never produce injurious dilatation and never exhaust the heart's reserve.

We must accept this explanation on the basis of experimental proof. The heart of the normal athlete is an organ with a reserve far in excess of the organs and systems it supplies. It cannot be strained because other bodily mechanisms have lower protective thresholds. For example, skeletal muscle cramp or cerebral anemia will set in and stop the athlete before the heart gives out. Lately more knowledge of the effects of hypoglycemia has led us to attribute to that syndrome the condition of the athlete at the conclusion of the race. The blood-sugar levels of runners who are forced to drop out of marathon races is supporting evidence of this theory, since on numerous occasions the blood sugar has been found almost to approach the level at which unconsciousness comes on.

We must, therefore, take into consideration all these mechanisms before we blame the symptoms of dyspnea, rapid pulse, exhaustion or even coma on the heart. Consider always the fact that Nature surrounds and protects the heart by a series of defensive barriers because it is so indispensable to life.

One of the most discussed and interesting questions relating to the problem of the heart in athletics is the so-called chronic enlargement supposedly resulting from strain long continued and referred to for years as "athlete's heart." If we approach this problem by studying the hearts of lower animals and drawing conclusions from what we observe in them, we may easily be misled. Clark points out some striking differences in the heart weights in proportion to the body bulk of active and inactive animals and shows that dogs bred for speed have higher heart ratios than ordinary dogs. Likewise Fox has shown that quiet birds like the owl have smaller heart ratios than active fliers. This author also describes hypertrophy of the heart in captive mammals and birds, but he cautions us that the essential character of these changes is open to dispute in the absence of proof that some unrecognized previous infection or toxemia did not exist. Since there are some striking differences in the physics of the circulation in the lower animals, particularly in birds, we must be on our guard and not draw general conclusions too readily. However, if work hypertrophy occurs among the commoner beasts of burden, we should reasonably expect to find the pathologic museums of our veterinary schools crowded with these specimens. Inquiry reveals that this is not the case.

Studies by Gordon, Richards and my own observations all show quite conclusively that enlargement of the heart of healthy athletes does not occur even when the period of training extends over many years. Consequently we do not believe that participation in college athletics predisposes to cardiac enlargement and to the disability which commonly comes to those who have large hearts. We cannot deny that the heart muscle develops the same as any other muscle and benefits from exercise which it needs, whether healthy or diseased. In consequence of this development there is, it is true, an increase in size, but the amount of this increase relative to the initial bulk is small. We know that the heart does not enlarge with exercise in the same ratio as skeletal muscle, but even though we assume that it does, the increase in size, as we note it under the fluoroscope, falls far short of the enlargement commonly seen as the result of disease. We must admit at this stage of our discussion that concentric hypertrophy of the heart may be present and escape recognition under the fluoroscope, but this form is rarely in evidence at postmortem.

Gordon concludes from his careful study of marathon runners that many years of training and competition do not cause cardiac enlargement. Pancoast, likewise, after examining the chest plates of many athletes, found no cardiac enlargement in any of them. He observes that among them was one of the world's greatest runners, who showed no cardiac enlargement in spite of the fact that one lung was almost obliterated by pleural thick-



ening and adhesions. The examination of transcontinental foot runners, who ran 3434 miles in 84 consecutive days, showed heart diameters within normal limits. The only large hearts I have seen in athletes have been those secondary to previous unrecognized rheumatic infection.

The relationship between active participation in school and college athletics and the early development of cardiovascular degenerative changes is another problem deserving attention. The sudden death in middle life of a man who had previously been a world's record holder will be widely discussed and cited as an example of the ill effects of athletics on the cardiovascular system in later life. Hundreds of others who engaged in the same form of training at the same university and who ran in the same races will be forgotten and their records uninvestigated. Careful studies of athletes in later life are rare in the literature. Morgan, in his analysis of the first 24 Oxford and Cambridge boat races from 1829 to 1869, both inclusive, in which he obtained information from all of the 255 living members of the crews except four, showed that there is little appreciable difference in the mortality from heart disease among university oarsmen of corresponding age. Edgcombe,<sup>87</sup> also, after careful inquiry into the histories of a large number of university oarsmen, showed that they are no more short-lived than nonathletic men, nor are they prone to die of heart affections.

The sustained interest in all forms of athletic activity in America should impress upon university officials the duty of providing the equipment necessary to carry out a complete study of the cardiovascular system of all athletes. The usual methods of percussion, a blood-pressure reading, and auscultation no longer suffice. Fluoroscopy is needed to determine accurately the cardiac size and shape. Likewise, routine electrocardiograms are indicated for those students who display any of the arrhythmias or who give a history of antecedent rheumatic infection.

A special form for this study may be useful (Table XV). It should include a complete survey of the past medical and family histories. We sometimes find the family history of great value when we are called upon to render a decision as to the advisability of a student engaging in athletic competition. Should one or more members of the family show evidence of early cardiovascular degenerative changes, we are apt to study the student more closely and to note in detail the response to exercise. In this group special attention should be paid to any abnormal blood-pressure elevations if long sustained. The blood vessels of the eye grounds should be examined frequently for early changes.

When the cardiovascular examination of each student is completed, the school physician should write a full opinion based on these findings. The evidence should be weighed and the decision given; and this should be done unhesitatingly, for uncertainty on the part of the examiner plays havoc with the mental condition of the student.

Diseased hearts should be carefully and completely studied. These students should not be sent out with the cautiously imparted knowledge that

TABLE XV  
FORM FOR STUDY OF ATHLETES

|          |        |      |
|----------|--------|------|
| NAME     | Age    | Date |
| Address: | Height |      |
|          | Weight |      |

**HISTORY**

Previous general state of health.

Has heart disease ever been diagnosed?  
(When and by whom)

|                 |                       |
|-----------------|-----------------------|
| Colds           | Scarlet fever         |
| Tonsillitis     | Diphtheria            |
| Tonsils removed | Pneumonia             |
| Chorea          | Influenza             |
| Growing pains   | Recent loss of weight |
| Rheumatic fever | Operations            |
| Thyroid disease | Other illnesses       |
| Kidney disease  |                       |

Athletic history: Sports indulged in

Endurance

Any family history of: Heart disease

Kidney disease

High blood pressure

Tuberculosis

General condition at present. Fatigue. Pain over heart. Shortness of breath.

Palpitation.

**EXAMINATION**

Type of individual: Build

Physique

Type of chest

Thyroid

Heart outline:

Auscultatory findings:

Electrocardiogram:

Orthodiagram:

DIAGNOSIS:

Recommendations:

they have "heart trouble" and should "take it easy." They need exercise and careful grading of their exercise. They should be studied from the standpoint of the functional capacity of the cardiac muscle. We cannot deny the fact that some forms of athletic activity have a definite value in the treatment of cardiovascular disease. Furthermore, in cardiac cases, when compensation is good, we may be gratified to observe some decrease in the heart size after participation in the graded exercises designed to fit their tolerance.

A prescription of rest in the case of the student in whom the only finding is an apical or pulmonic systolic murmur, is indeed radical advice. He misses thereby much that college life offers, the companionship of fellow athletes, the sportsmanship that competition develops, and the beneficial effects of sports in building his body; for we cannot deny that properly regulated athletic training increases the efficiency of the heart, assists the blood and lymph flow, increases the vital capacity, stimulates metabolic activity, develops a higher resistance to bacterial invasion, and, if well regulated, will act as a psychic diversion and improve the tone of the central nervous system. If the student is denied these advantages on the

basis of a single incomplete (often only auscultatory) examination of the heart, he will grow up with the belief that he is physically inferior. Psychiatrists tell us that this may prove a serious blow to character formation. The growing boy's whole attitude toward life may be adversely influenced, to mention nothing of the possibilities of the effect of the lack of exercise on the tone of the cardiac and skeletal musculature.

## DIET IN HEART DISEASE

"I saw a few die of hunger; of eating a hundred thousand."

—BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, *Poor Richard*, 1736.

Careful regulation of the diet is an important part of the management of the cardiac patient. While dietotherapy occupies a foremost place when diabetes complicates cardiac disease, proper attention must also be given to this aspect of therapy in the presence of obesity and hypertension. The object of any dietary regime is to lessen the work placed upon the heart, and when this is accomplished, it will greatly aid the other forms of therapy in maintaining circulatory efficiency.

Unfortunately, the subject of dietetics is uninteresting to many physicians, and as a result cultists have made extensive inroads in this important field. The patient of today is interested in dietary matters and usually turns to the faddist only when he fails to get the necessary information on the subject from his medical adviser. The obligation cannot be filled by having at hand printed sheets containing dietary instructions. The patient is an individual and likes individual attention. Consequently the value of any dietary scheme is greatly increased when it is written out for the patient at the time when treatment is discussed. Moreover, it is appreciated, is talked about in the hinterlands, and as a result is much more apt to be followed. Before considering the detailed dietary management of the various types of heart disease, the principles upon which these diets are constructed will be reviewed briefly.

An adequate diet is made up of proteins, fats, carbohydrates, salts, water, and vitamins. It should have a caloric value sufficient to meet basal metabolic requirements plus the stimulating action of certain foodstuffs and the demands made by the type of work performed by the patient. The average requirements for a man doing light work is 3000 calories per day, while the average requirement for a woman is 2700 calories.

Protein furnishes the material for the growth and repair of the body tissues and is an essential constituent of the diet. While the adult does not require protein for growth, it is still needed for tissue replacement. All proteins consist of giant molecules that are split up during digestion into somewhat over twenty simple compounds that are known as amino-acids. These substances are further broken up into glucose and fatty acids. Protein contains 16 per cent nitrogen, consequently each gram of nitrogen is equivalent to 6.25 Gm. of protein metabolized. The daily intake of protein should be about 1 Gm. for each kilogram of body weight. Man is a fortunate animal, for in health adaptation is possible on diets that contain

a wide variation in the quantity of protein. Inhabitants of the Arctic Circle, for example, may live indefinitely on a strictly carnivorous diet. The cardiac patient should always use great care in the amount of protein foodstuffs that he selects. While an amount sufficient to replace ordinary wear and tear should be allowed, amounts above 50 Gm. a day may accelerate metabolism and cardiac rate and in this manner increase the work of the heart. Consequently the specific dynamic action of this foodstuff is a factor to be reckoned with at all times. It is evident that over-exertion after a meal rich in protein places a load on the myocardium that often has disastrous results. The protein in the diet of the ambulatory cardiac patient should therefore be restricted, and the amount may be as low as 0.5 Gm. per kilogram of body weight.

Carbohydrates are important constituents of the diet of the cardiac patient, since they furnish the contracting heart muscle with its most readily assimilated food. For this reason carbohydrates should make up well over 50 per cent of the energy content of the diet in patients who suffer from heart disease. At the present time this is no burden to the poorer classes since nearly all carbohydrates are cheap and readily obtainable.

Fats do not hold a place of importance on the menu of the cardiac patient. In large amounts they exert a depressing effect on gastric secretion and slow the emptying of the stomach. For this reason they should be used sparingly since all foods recommended to a patient who has advanced heart damage should be easily digested. According to many writers, an excess of fat in the diet plays a part in the development of the generalized arteriosclerosis in diabetes, nephritis, and nephrosis. The results of future experiments must be awaited, however, to prove the exact relationship of excess fat in the diet to degenerative changes in the presence of a normal metabolism.

The mineral constituents of the diet are also important to patients who suffer from cardiovascular disease and may be obtained in the required amounts in milk and vegetables. Sodium chloride is perhaps the only salt consumed as such, and the regulation of its daily intake warrants consideration in the presence of congestive failure. About 1 to 2 Gm. of sodium chloride are needed daily, but the average person consumes *amounts far in excess of this figure.*

Calcium is essential, especially in children, and unless the diet is carefully planned, it is much more likely to show a deficiency of this element. About 0.9 to 1.0 Gm. of calcium is required daily, and this can best be obtained in milk. Approximately 12 mg. of iron constitute the daily requirement, although in pregnancy this figure is increased. Iodine is essential to prevent the development of simple goiter and should be given in districts where there is a known deficiency. This requirement may be met by the use of iodized salt.

Patients on adequate diets usually obtain a sufficient supply of vitamins from the ordinary foods. The green vegetables and fresh fruit juices supply

vitamin C, whole wheat bread and the preparations containing wheat germ furnish vitamin B, whole milk, meat fat, and eggs add a plentiful supply of vitamins A and D. The latter can be increased by the addition of cod-liver oil. The relationship between the vitamins and circulatory efficiency will be taken up in greater detail later (page 552).

## ANEMIA

Mild grades of secondary anemia have no demonstrable effect on the heart. Severe secondary anemias and primary or Addison's anemia may produce fatty degenerative changes in the cardiac muscle. High grades of anemia may contribute to the production of congestive failure in rare instances, and anginal symptoms may arise from this alteration in the quality of the blood reaching the myocardium (page 423).

The heart disabled by anemia responds to liver therapy and a diet rich in substances that contain the anti-anemic factors, e.g., liver or its equivalent, vitamins and soluble iron salts. In anemia, when achlorhydria is present, gastrointestinal symptoms that are often productive of secondary cardiovascular effects may be prevented by suitable amounts of dilute hydrochloric acid taken with the meals.

Weakness, palpitation and tachycardia are other cardiac symptoms that often appear in patients who have severe anemias of the secondary type. These may disappear when the cause of the anemia is discovered and treated.

## ARTERIOSCLEROSIS

The relationship between diet and arteriosclerosis has been a favorite problem for investigators for many years. Diets containing the various foodstuffs in different proportions as well as in excessive and insufficient amounts have been fed to laboratory animals. Patients with disorders of metabolism have also been studied for some possible clue regarding the relationship of substances in the diet to the speeding up of the process of sclerosis.

The results of animal experimentations have been interesting and suggestive, but wide conclusions should not be drawn. The feeding of meat to rabbits has been shown to result in considerable aortic sclerosis, while rabbits on milk and egg diets develop extensive intimal sclerosis. Cholesterol has the same effect, according to some observers. Others claim that the high protein diet causes the arterial changes that uniformly appear in these laboratory animals.

Coronary sclerosis has also been noted in white mice following diets high in cholesterol. Similar changes, however, have not been seen in dogs and other carnivorous animals. We may surmise that the abnormal substances in the diets of the rabbits and mice produce deviations in metabolism and perhaps account for the arterial changes. In any event we are driven

back to cholesterol metabolism, and must admit that it differs in various species under the same conditions.

In man we cannot say that excess intake of foods gives arteriosclerosis. If obesity is directly related to hypertension (which I doubt), then it may influence in this manner the state of the arteries. Undernutrition apparently does not lead to arteriosclerosis, for if it did, this lesion would be a prevalent disease in many countries of the world today. If high protein diets result eventually in arterial changes, studies of Eskimos should show a marked evidence of arteriosclerosis. This is not the case. On the other hand, races that exist mainly on carbohydrates exhibit abundant sclerosis, so we cannot blame the high protein diets for degenerative arterial changes.

Joslin's studies<sup>176</sup> seem to show that in diabetes the excess fat in the diet contributes to early sclerosis, but here, we must remember, the metabolism is decidedly abnormal. Neither can we blame the development of arteriosclerosis on diets that consist largely of alcoholic beverages, for we do not find advanced changes in the vessels of alcoholics when viewed in the light of the age of the patient.

It is a common observation that patients who have widespread arteriosclerosis, accompanied by advanced changes in the coronary tree, gradually lose weight. This has been referred to as cardiac cachexia. In some cases it may be accelerated by the effects of congestive failure on the digestive tract, but it is seen also in patients who never show congestive phenomena. Moreover, in the latter group, a marked loss of weight may occur when the appetite is good and when the intake of food is sufficient to meet the bodily requirements. Beyond a doubt the arteriosclerotic changes interfere in some way with the proper absorption and utilization of foodstuffs. These patients, therefore, should be fed a rich, full diet. Large meals should not be allowed since the same result is obtainable through frequent feedings that have a small bulk but a relatively high food value.

In this modern age we continually strive to make our treatment conform to the most recent opinions emanating from research laboratories. The family physician of the old school, in treating many members of the same family, called the arteriosclerosis that developed at an early age in successive generations a "diathesis." If pressed in the matter of definition he would tell you, "It's bred in them." In these patients we should plan treatment not entirely along dietary lines, but more toward the prevention of infection and the better regulation of damaging occupations if we hope to avoid early arterial changes. The diet should, of course, be regulated in the presence of diabetes and obesity.

In old age, with the usual degree of arteriosclerotic changes present, a slight weight loss of ten pounds or so should not in itself be cause for alarm. While it has been truthfully said that the worst thing that can happen to an old man is to acquire a young wife who is a good cook, most of the blame for the abnormal appetites of old people lies in the condition of their gastro-intestinal tracts, possibly associated with unbalanced diets. Abnormal sensations of hunger and capricious appetites

are common and are often associated with atrophic changes in the stomach and the secreting glands as well as atrophy of the usual reflex pathways. While a diet complete in all the foodstuffs should be given to the older patient if there is demonstrable cardiac damage, the amount of the food and the speed of its intake should be carefully guarded. Circulatory accidents in old people many times can be avoided if these principles are followed.

## HYPERTENSION

Diet faddists draw many followers from this large group, and in consequence much nonsense continues to be preached by radio programs and magazine articles regarding the cure of hypertension by dietary measures. The main darts are directed toward the proteins (the "red meats" of the trolley-car conversations) and salt, although fats and carbohydrates are not neglected.

Protein restriction has enjoyed a long popularity. It has appeal and in the American home where meat appears in such abundance, it may have some value. In patients with hypertension who show good renal function, no nitrogen retention, and slight, if any, cardiac damage, great restriction of proteins is certainly not indicated. However, so deeply do press and radio influence the American public that to make a statement of this nature to a patient of the hypertensive type trained in the present belief is usually sufficient to undermine confidence at once. The hypertensive tourist of physicians' offices will usually co-operate in the matter of drug therapy (so many times not indicated), and may even agree to a major operative procedure, yet he cannot be induced to eat meat.

Experimental evidence fails to show that excess of protein tends to elevate the arterial pressure. On the other hand, a low protein diet long continued may lower the blood pressure, but this is accomplished through the anemia and physical weakness that are produced. Both of these undesirable end-products of faulty dieting may contribute to an earlier cardiac breakdown. Cardiac cases, following a long term in one of the dietary camps, often show marked improvement when induced to take protein. Even in the presence of a complicating renal lesion, particularly of the nephrotic type with considerable albuminuria, the addition of protein to the diet is an important factor in clearing the edema. Consequently, in the absence of cardiac failure, proteins should be retained in the diets of patients suffering from essential hypertension in the amounts recommended for the normal person.

Salt restriction is another popular practice with deep roots in the small volumes written to advise the laity in matters medical. Extensive investigations again fail to show that rigid salt restriction has any effect on the clinical course of hypertension. Neither will excessive quantities elevate the blood pressure. Those who have tried living on salt-poor diets can attest to the fact that they never look forward to meal time and many ill-advised



cardiac patients do poorly because of the anorexia and loss of strength that follow salt-free diets. A normal intake of sodium chloride should be permitted in the absence of congestive failure. During congestive failure patients should be warned against excess quantities of salts and salty foods. Seasonings of all kinds should likewise be prohibited. Recently the salt in the diet has become a most important consideration when organic mercurial diuretics are employed over long periods (page 90).

If obesity accompanies hypertension, the diet is written accordingly, otherwise a normal diet should be allowed. The patient must be cautioned against overeating and too rapid eating, particularly when the anginal syndrome accompanies hypertension. Fluids need not be restricted in the absence of congestive failure although too much fluid should not be allowed.

### OBEITY

Obesity is a well recognized handicap to the patient who has cardiac disease. While the extra weight in itself is a burden to the heart, the increase in the size of the surface area in these cases places an additional load on the peripheral circulation. The extra fat accumulating about the heart may also interfere with its free contraction and infiltrate the organ with further impairment in function.

Treatment of the obese cardiac patient by dietary measures lessens the work of the heart by lowering the basal metabolism. Since protein foods furnish the greatest stimulus to metabolism, care should be taken to reduce the intake of this constituent of the diet to the lowest possible figure, usually 1 Gm. or less per kilogram of ideal or predicted weight.

Reduction of the diet should be brought about gradually. The caloric need of the patient should always be calculated and a diet prescribed that is below this basic level. It is well to proceed slowly, by choosing a diet at first that contains a fairly high allowance. Carbohydrates should be given to the extent of 0.6 Gm. for every gram of protein to maintain nitrogen balance, for carbohydrate in this proportion acts in the capacity of protein sparer. Very little fat is allowed in the diet, and the body is encouraged to use the fat in its depots to make up for the deficient caloric intake. Green vegetables supply vitamins, and their bulk satisfies hunger. Between meals, especially at the start of the regime, occasional glucose candies may be allowed to provide quickly utilizable energy and to combat exhaustion.

If the ambulatory cardiac patient who is overweight can be encouraged to co-operate and lose on the average of six pounds in one month, much improvement in the subjective symptoms will follow. Diets calculated to provide 1000 to 1200 calories are employed in the majority of cases.

In patients who require only mild reduction programs, the qualitative restriction shown in Table XVI\* may be sufficient. For the convenience of

\* Tables XVI to XXXIII reprinted from *Treatment by Diet* by Barboraka, J. B. Lippincott Company.

TABLE XVI  
SIMPLE QUALITATIVE RESTRICTION

## TYPICAL FOODS ALLOWED IN REDUCTION DIETS

Milk, skimmed, and buttermilk  
Egg  
Meat, lean  
Meats low in fat, as:  
    Chicken—lean portion  
    Liver  
    Fish, other than salmon  
    Shrimp  
    Crabmeat  
Fruit, 5 and 10%  
Vegetables, 3 and 6%  
Clear soup

## TYPICAL FOODS TO AVOID IN REDUCTION DIETS

Sugar and All Sweets  
Starches as:  
    Bread  
    Cereals  
    Macaroni  
    Spaghetti  
    Pastry, pie, cakes  
    Sweet desserts  
Vegetables High in Carbohydrates as:  
    Potato  
    Shelled peas  
    Shelled beans  
    Corn  
    Parsnips  
Fats as:  
    Butter  
    Salad oils  
    Cream  
Meats high in fat as:  
    Pork  
    Lamb chops with large amounts of fat

the reader, a classification of the fresh fruits and vegetables according to their percentage of carbohydrate content has been included (Table XVII). A few sample reduction diets suggesting the amount and distribution of the daily food allowance that may serve as patterns when writing these dietary prescriptions will be found in Tables XVIII, XIX, XX.

## RHEUMATIC HEART DISEASE

The dietary regime in patients suffering from active infection should be planned to combat the wasting effect of the long febrile siege. All the food that can be comfortably and safely taken should be allowed, and in this regime carbohydrates predominate since every effort is made to keep up body weight. Vitamin C has been claimed to have a direct relationship to rheumatic infection and has been given in large amounts in the diets of these patients, but I have never seen any marked benefit follow its administration. Fluids should be given freely, owing to excessive sweating; and

TABLE XVII

CLASSIFICATION OF FRESH VEGETABLES AND FRESH FRUITS ACCORDING TO PERCENTAGE OF CARBOHYDRATE CONTENT

## VEGETABLES

| 3%                 | 6%                   | 15%      | 20%              |
|--------------------|----------------------|----------|------------------|
| Asparagus          | Artichoke, French    | Parsnips | Corn             |
| Beet Greens        | Beet                 | Salsify  | Garlic           |
| Broccoli           | Carrot               | Pea      | Horseradish Root |
| Brussel Sprouts    | Celeriac             |          | Potato           |
| Cabbage            | Dandelion Greens     |          | Dried Bean       |
| Chinese Cabbage    | Kale                 |          |                  |
| Cauliflower        | Kohl Rabi            |          |                  |
| Celery             | Leeks                |          |                  |
| Cucumber           | Onion                |          |                  |
| Eggplant           | Parsley              |          |                  |
| Endive             | Pea (tiny)           |          |                  |
| Lettuce            | Pumpkin              |          |                  |
| Marrow             | Rutabaga             |          |                  |
| Mustard Greens     | String Bean (mature) |          |                  |
| Green Pepper       | Squash               |          |                  |
| Okra               | Turnip               |          |                  |
| Radish             |                      |          |                  |
| Sauerkraut         |                      |          |                  |
| Sorrel             |                      |          |                  |
| Spinach            |                      |          |                  |
| String Bean (tiny) |                      |          |                  |
| Summer Squash      |                      |          |                  |
| Tomato             |                      |          |                  |
| Watercress         |                      |          |                  |

## FRUITS

| 5%         | 10%        | 15%         | 20%         |
|------------|------------|-------------|-------------|
| Muskmelon  | Blackberry | Apple       | Banana      |
| Honeydew   | Cranberry  | Apricot     | Fig (fresh) |
| Watermelon | Gooseberry | Blueberry   | Grape Juice |
| Rhubarb    | Grapefruit | Cherry      | Fresh Prune |
| *Avocado   | Lemon      | Currant     |             |
|            | Lime       | Grape       |             |
|            | Orange     | Guava       |             |
|            | Papaya     | Huckleberry |             |
|            | Peach      | Nectarine   |             |
|            | Pineapple  | Papaw       |             |
|            | Strawberry | Pear        |             |
|            | Tangerine  | Plum        |             |
|            |            | Quince      |             |
|            |            | Raspberry   |             |

\* Avocados contain 17.2 per cent fat.

an increase in the sodium chloride intake is good therapy for the same reason.

## CARDIOVASCULAR SYPHILIS

The drastic "cures" for aneurysms recommended by early writers included strenuous dietary measures as well as rest and venesection. Fluid and food were reduced to extremely low levels in the regime originally suggested by Albertini and Valsalva in the seventeenth century (page 232). Today no particular dietary program for cardiovascular syphilis is recom-

TABLE XVIII  
REDUCTION DIET

FOR EXPECTED OR IDEAL WEIGHT OF 160 POUNDS

800 Calories

*Suggested Distribution of the Total Food Allowance for One Day*

| BREAKFAST              |                          | Grams |
|------------------------|--------------------------|-------|
| Fruit, 10%             | 1 serving                | 100   |
| Egg                    | 1                        | 50    |
| Egg whites             | 2                        | 66    |
| Bread                  | $\frac{1}{2}$ thin slice | 10    |
| Butter                 | $\frac{1}{4}$ square     | 3     |
| Beverage—coffee or tea |                          |       |
| LUNCHEON               |                          |       |
| Meat (low in fat)      | 1 large serving          | 90    |
| Vegetables, 3%         | 2 small servings         | 150   |
| Fruit, 5%              | 1 serving                | 100   |
| Milk (skimmed)         | 1 glass                  | 200   |
| DINNER                 |                          |       |
| Meat (lean)            | 1 large serving          | 90    |
| Vegetable, 6%          | 1 small serving          | 75    |
| Salad, vegetable, 3%   | 1 small serving          | 75    |
| Fruit, 10%             | 1 serving                | 100   |
| Milk (skimmed)         | 1 glass                  | 200   |

TABLE XIX  
REDUCTION DIET

FOR EXPECTED OR IDEAL WEIGHT OF 160 POUNDS

1,000 Calories

*Suggested Distribution of the Total Food Allowance for One Day*

| BREAKFAST              |                          | Grams |
|------------------------|--------------------------|-------|
| Fruit, 10%             | 1 serving                | 100   |
| Bacon                  | 1 slice, crisp           | 5     |
| Egg                    | 1                        | 50    |
| Bread                  | $\frac{1}{2}$ thin slice | 10    |
| Butter                 | $\frac{1}{4}$ square     | 5     |
| Beverage—coffee or tea |                          |       |
| LUNCHEON               |                          |       |
| Meat                   | 1 large serving          | 90    |
| Vegetables, 3%         | 2 small servings         | 150   |
| Butter                 | $\frac{1}{4}$ square     | 5     |
| Fruit, 10%             | 1 serving                | 100   |
| Milk (skimmed)         | 1 glass                  | 200   |
| DINNER                 |                          |       |
| Meat                   | 1 large serving          | 90    |
| Vegetable, 6%          | 1 small serving          | 75    |
| Salad: vegetable, 3%   | 1 small serving          | 75    |
| Butter                 | $\frac{1}{4}$ square     | 5     |
| Fruit, 5%              | 1 serving                | 100   |
| Milk (skimmed)         | 1 glass                  | 200   |

TABLE XX  
REDUCTION DIET

FOR EXPECTED OR IDEAL WEIGHT OF 160 POUNDS

1,200 Calories

*Suggested Distribution of the Total Food Allowance for One Day*

BREAKFAST

|                        |                           | Grams |
|------------------------|---------------------------|-------|
| Fruit, 10%             | 1 serving                 | 100   |
| Bacon                  | 1 slice, crisp.           | 5     |
| Egg                    | 1                         | 50    |
| Bread                  | $\frac{1}{2}$ thin slice. | 10    |
| Butter                 | 1 square                  | 10    |
| Cream, 20%             | 1 tablespoon              | 15    |
| Beverage—coffee or tea |                           |       |

LUNCHEON

|                |                        |     |
|----------------|------------------------|-----|
| Meat           | 1 large serving        | 90  |
| Vegetable, 3%  | 2 small servings       | 150 |
| Butter         | $1\frac{1}{2}$ squares | 15  |
| Fruit, 10%     | 1 serving              | 100 |
| Milk (skimmed) | 1 glass                | 200 |

DINNER

|                      |                        |     |
|----------------------|------------------------|-----|
| Meat                 | 1 large serving        | 90  |
| Vegetable, 6%        | 1 small serving        | 75  |
| Salad: vegetable, 3% | 1 small serving        | 75  |
| Butter               | $1\frac{1}{2}$ squares | 15  |
| Fruit, 5%            | 1 serving              | 100 |
| Milk (skimmed)       | 1 glass                | 200 |

mended. The content of the diet prescription is entirely governed by the patient's weight and the presence or absence of congestive cardiac failure. We must admit, however, in the light of modern discoveries of the physiologic chemists, that the old starvation treatment of Albertini and Valsalva was not without its effect on the basal metabolism, blood pressure, and pulse rate, and certainly must have produced in this manner the favorable (although temporary) effect they claimed for it.

### DIET IN CONGESTIVE FAILURE

With the onset of congestive failure, diet is a most essential part of the management. When the patient is first seen, the presence of dyspnea and alimentary-tract congestion generally places the thought of food in the background.

At the start the fluid intake should be restricted. It is a custom to begin treatment of congestive failure with the diet originally proposed in 1866 by Karell, a Russian court physician. While not originally prescribed for patients with this type of heart disease, but rather for "les hydropsies de toute nature," Karell's diet consisted of skimmed milk, divided into four feedings of 200 cc. each, given at 8 A.M., 12 M., 4 P.M., and 8 P.M. This regime furnishes 26 Gm. of protein, 1.6 Gm. of NaCl, 800 cc. of fluid and approximately 550 calories. It may be continued for one or two days. Pa-

tients who cannot take milk may substitute other articles to make up a total of the same caloric value from the following list: orange juice, cereal gruel (Pabulum\*), thin cream soups or buttered toast. As a rule, it is well to restrict the fluid intake to 1200 cc. during the first 24 hours. When satis-



FIG. 163. Beri-beri. (Wet type) (Courtesy, Philippine Bureau of Science.)

factory diuresis has been obtained, the fluid intake may be increased to an extent compatible with comfort and the total urinary output.

When improvement in the patient's condition occurs, little further attention is usually given to diet. However, the amount and type of food ingested is most important at this stage and greatly influences the cardiac mechanism through its effect on the basal metabolism. Undernutrition in normal

\* Mead Johnson Company.

individuals has been shown to be accompanied by a fall in the pulse rate, blood pressure, and metabolic rate. These alterations follow a slight weight loss and appear even though the usual activities are unrestricted. If we produce similar physiologic alterations during convalescence from congestive failure, we shall greatly aid cardiac recovery. Consequently restriction of the diet for the first two or three weeks of the patient's convalescence is helpful. Proger<sup>307</sup> advises first a severe and then a more moderate dietary restriction over this period, so that about 10 per cent of the patient's body weight is lost. In three weeks the patient should be raised to a maintenance diet. During this entire period, fluids may be restricted, for a drop in the level of fluid exchange causes the patient to drink less.

This temporary regime of undernutrition produces in the cardiac patient who is convalescing from an attack of congestive failure a further slowing of the pulse beyond the degree obtained by bed rest and digitalis and an additional increase in blood pressure. The cardiac output is less, and the condition of the heart improves because it has less work to do at the lower metabolic level. In addition, as weight is lost, the vital capacity increases. Measurements in some cases may show a decrease in cardiac size. When the same dietary principles are employed in ambulatory cardiac patients, an improvement in the exercise tolerance is noted. During the first days of the dietary restriction, hunger and weakness may be prominent subjective complaints. The co-operative patient is usually satisfied with the diet when its purpose is explained, especially if the improvement is evident following the loss of weight.

If the patient has had several attacks of congestive failure and considerable weight has already been lost, the period of undernutrition should be omitted and the diet kept above maintenance levels. Obese patients many times do not experience the beneficial effects above described. The best results may be obtained in cases where the patient is normal in weight or slightly above the normal, although individual variations in this response may occur.

TABLE XXI  
MODIFIED KARELL DIET

| BREAKFAST        |                                      | Grams |
|------------------|--------------------------------------|-------|
| Bread (toast)    | $\frac{1}{2}$ thin slice. . . . .    | 10    |
| Fruit, 10%       | 1 serving . . . . .                  | 100   |
| Sugar . . . . .  | 1 teaspoon . . . . .                 | 5     |
| Egg . . . . .    | 1 . . . . .                          | 50    |
| LUNCHEON         |                                      |       |
| Bread (toast)    | .. $\frac{1}{2}$ thin slice. . . . . | 10    |
| Cream soup       | . $\frac{2}{3}$ cup . . . . .        | 150   |
| Butter . . . . . | . $\frac{1}{2}$ square. . . . .      | 5     |
| DINNER           |                                      |       |
| Bread (toast)    | . $\frac{1}{2}$ thin slice. . . . .  | 10    |
| Milk. . . . .    | ... 1 glass. . . . .                 | 200   |
| Butter. . . . .  | . . . . . 1 square. . . . .          | 10    |
| Egg. . . . .     | . . . . . 1 . . . . .                | 50    |

The diets shown in Tables XXI, XXII, XXIII, may be used as patterns when variations of the Karell diet or increase in the caloric intake are called for following an attack of congestive failure.

TABLE XXII  
HEART DISEASE

CARDIAC DIET I

45 Grams Protein

1,400 Calories

*Suggested Distribution of the Total Food Allowance for One Day*

BREAKFAST

|                            |                      | Grams |
|----------------------------|----------------------|-------|
| Fruit Juice, 10%           | $\frac{1}{4}$ glass  | 50    |
| Cereal (cooked)            | $\frac{1}{2}$ cup    | 105   |
| Egg                        | 1                    | 50    |
| Bread (toast)              | 1 thin slice         | 20    |
| Butter                     | $\frac{1}{2}$ square | 5     |
| Cream, 20%                 | $\frac{1}{4}$ cup    | 60    |
| Beverage—coffee substitute |                      |       |
| 10 00 A.M. Fruit juice     | $\frac{1}{2}$ glass  | 100   |

LUNCHEON

|                           |                      |     |
|---------------------------|----------------------|-----|
| Soup:                     |                      |     |
| Vegetable puree, 3% or 6% | $\frac{1}{2}$ cup    | 100 |
| Milk . . .                | $\frac{1}{2}$ glass  | 100 |
| Butter                    | $\frac{1}{2}$ square | 5   |
| Egg or egg substitute     | 1                    | 50  |
| Bread (toast)             | 1 thin slice         | 20  |
| Butter                    | $\frac{1}{2}$ square | 5   |
| Fruit puree, 10% or 15%   | $\frac{1}{2}$ cup    | 100 |
| 3 00 P.M. Milk            | 1 glass              | 200 |

DINNER

|                      |                      |     |
|----------------------|----------------------|-----|
| Fruit juice, 10%     | $\frac{1}{4}$ glass  | 50  |
| Milk toast:          |                      |     |
| Milk . . .           | 1 glass              | 200 |
| Toast,               | 1 thin slice         | 20  |
| Butter . .           | $\frac{1}{2}$ square | 5   |
| Custard . . .        | $\frac{1}{2}$ cup    | 100 |
| Bedtime, Fruit juice | $\frac{1}{2}$ glass  | 100 |

The principles that guide the physician in his selection of a suitable dietary regime for the patient convalescing from an attack of congestive failure may be briefly summarized as follows: add to the intake gradually, always keeping below basal requirements. This may be done by giving frequent small feedings, thus avoiding the strain that large meals place on the cardiac reserve. The cardiac muscle requires an abundance of carbohydrates (glucose) for its recovery, and this constituent of the diet should be proportionately increased. While moderate restriction in fluid intake is essential as long as edema can be demonstrated clinically, it is most important during this period to keep the salt intake low. However, if large amounts of mercurial diuretics are being given, care should be taken not



chief vitamin deficiency associated with major disturbances of the cardiovascular system.

Isolation of vitamin B followed investigations of the cause of beriberi. This substance was therefore known as the antiberiberi vitamin. Still later discoveries proved that vitamin B was a complex substance made up of two or more factors differentiated on the basis of sensitivity to heat. The antiberiberi vitamin was designated  $B_1$ , and the newly isolated substance as vitamin  $B_2$  or antidermatitis vitamin or pellagra-preventing (P-P) factor. Substances like wheat germ, yeast, whole meal cereals, nuts, egg yolk, liver, heart, and kidney are rich in vitamin  $B_1$ . However, it may be said that substances rich in one vitamin of this complex also contain varying amounts of the others.

In reviewing the circulatory abnormalities that follow a diet deficient in the  $B_1$  factor, let us consider first the effect of a marked deficiency. This results in the disease picture known as beriberi that is commonly encountered in many of the rice-eating countries of the East: China, Japan, India, the Philippines, and the Dutch Indies, and less frequently in other countries. Beriberi can occur in mild or severe forms causing partial or complete deficiency states at any age or in any race where poverty and ignorance prevail. It is frequently associated with a diet of refined cereals, for in the milling process the germ of the grain containing the vitamin is removed.

In many ways beriberi is a curious disease. Variable factors such as age, locality, type of work, and nationality appear greatly to influence the clinical picture, and this is particularly true in respect to the cardiovascular system. In the infant, beriberi usually runs an acute course. There may be sudden diminution of urine, rigidity of the body, dyspnea, and cyanosis. Weakness, rapid pulse, and edema of the legs may develop quickly, and in the absence of prompt treatment, sudden death may occur. In the adult, the picture is quite different. The onset is insidious, with vague and general symptoms of fatigue, indigestion, mild grades of dyspnea, tachycardia, and tenderness over the muscles. Later symptoms pointing to the involvement of the nervous system may develop, and degenerative changes appear in the peripheral nerves. When neuritis predominates, the condition is known as the "dry type" of beriberi. In contrast to this course, another patient may show a *predominance of cardiovascular symptoms: dyspnea, marked cardiac enlargement with dilatation, and fluid in the serous cavities*. This is the so-called "wet type" (Fig. 163). Some observers claim that this form is more apt to develop in young adult males engaged in strenuous occupations where neuritis does not appear early and force the patient to rest. Gastro-intestinal symptoms such as anorexia, diarrhea, and vomiting may occur in both types.

Wenckebach, studying a number of advanced cases in Java with Aalsmeer,<sup>389</sup> attempted to correlate the clinical and autopsy findings of beriberi and described the cardiac enlargement and edema. He popularized the term "beriberi heart." Wenckebach likewise called attention to the fact that

the active muscles appear to suffer most in this disease: the soleus, the masseter, the gastrocnemius, and finally the heart.

Lack of vitamin B<sub>1</sub> causes the heart to lose its power of vigorous contraction; its tone decreases and this is soon followed by dilatation. If we examine the changes that take place in the cardiac tissue and compare them with those observed in the nervous system, we shall find that they are quite similar. Sections of cardiac muscle in beriberi show swelling of the cells caused by retention of water, a condition that differs from ordinary edema. At autopsy, Wenckebach's cases showed dilatation of the right side of the heart: the right ventricle, the right auricle, and the conus arteriosus were seen literally to be "blown up" because of the high pressure on the venous side prior to death.

If we view the clinical symptoms in the light of these interesting and curious autopsy findings, the state of the circulation in beriberi becomes evident. At the onset there is only slight edema; all forms of exertion are poorly tolerated, but if they are continued, edema increases, and pulsations will be noted in all peripheral vessels. Rest is immediately beneficial in these cases, whereas adrenalin exerts a particularly unfavorable influence. When this drug is injected even in small doses, the diastolic pressure falls promptly to zero, and a pistol-shot sound appears in the femoral vessels. After vitamin B<sub>1</sub> is administered in curative doses in advanced beriberi, this reaction to adrenalin disappears in most instances.

These observations suggest that in the wet type of beriberi all the arterioles are widened. The blood literally runs from the arteries into the capillaries and veins. Consequently the systolic energy of the heart is not spent in the capillary bed, and the blood pours into the right heart behind a considerably increased venous pressure. Wenckebach described in these cases a "venous hum" in the neighborhood of the crural vein, produced by the increased velocity of the venous blood. The sudden high venous tide causes overloading of a right heart that is already seriously affected by the vitamin-B<sub>1</sub> deficiency. This explains the "blown up" appearance found at autopsy.

Studies carried out in this country recently have shown some aspects that correspond exactly to these views. A normal or increased velocity of the blood flow with a low arteriovenous oxygen difference have been consistently observed. This is in keeping with the impression that there is present in the wet type of beriberi a general arterial dilatation. The circulation time is an important point in the differential diagnosis between the wet type of beriberi and congestive heart failure. Improvement of the patient following administration of vitamin B<sub>1</sub> in beriberi is attended by an increase in the circulation time.

Posterior lobe of the pituitary (pitressin) has a striking effect on the circulatory disturbances of beriberi. Following the injection of this substance, the rapid blood flow is checked on the arterial side, and the patient notices immediate, subjective improvement. The heart rate is slowed, the diastolic pressure increases, the venous pressure falls, the venous hum

disappears, and the pistol-shot sound is no longer heard. In other words, the circulation time is slowed and the blood is held longer on the arterial side. This, of course, has raised the question: Is the circulatory picture of beriberi due to a decrease of production of the hormone from the posterior lobe of the pituitary gland?

Undoubtedly, since the depression years, many cases which show cardiovascular symptoms following marked vitamin B<sub>1</sub> deficiency have occurred in this country. Scott and Hermann<sup>336</sup> observed cases among the rice workers of Louisiana. Riesman and Davidson<sup>348</sup> have also reported cases, and an instance in a diabetic is recorded by Wohl.<sup>410</sup> Nearly every physician will occasionally meet patients who show signs of congestive failure in the absence of a valvular defect or increase of blood pressure or other obvious cause. In all of these instances the nutritional history should be carefully elicited. The patient may be a mixed type and give signs or symptoms of a deficiency state other than cardiovascular, for example, neuritis, or a dermatitis of the pellagra type. Various gastro-intestinal symptoms may appear. If the diagnosis is correct, all symptoms should improve following the administration of vitamin B<sub>1</sub>.

As we would expect, the electrocardiogram reflects the changes that take place in the circulatory system. Lately a variety of alterations have been described in the literature. Most cases show a sinus tachycardia with a tendency to T-wave alterations. Some of the T-wave alterations that have been encountered in deficiency states suggest coronary occlusion; so it is most important to review the clinical findings in all cases which show electrocardiograms of this type. In the deficiency states the waves are apt to change more quickly following treatment than they are usually observed to do in the presence of coronary disease. Consequently the disappearance of electrocardiographic deformities following the administration of vitamin B<sub>1</sub> is a valuable point in differential diagnosis.

Weiss and Wilkins<sup>380</sup> described four patients who experienced attacks of syncope in addition to other cardiac manifestations of the deficiency state. These patients were found to have a hyperactive carotid-sinus reflex (page 379), the slightest stimulation producing asystole and syncope. Administration of vitamin B<sub>1</sub> abolished the hyperexcitability at once in three of these patients.

Considering the number of vitamin-B<sub>1</sub> preparations now on the market, it is interesting to inquire into the effect of vitamin B<sub>1</sub> on the normal heart. Experiments to determine this have been carried out, and very large doses administered to control patients have been found to have no effect on the pulse rate, blood pressure, electrocardiogram, velocity of the blood flow or serum protein, and no untoward symptoms have been produced.

In many of the cases published in America which show marked cardiovascular symptoms accompanying deficiency of vitamin B<sub>1</sub>, alcohol has played a major role. Alcohol per se is incapable of causing any effect on the heart of laboratory animal or of man. However, by reason of the large consumption of alcohol, diets deficient in vitamin B<sub>1</sub> have been taken

by these patients over long periods. Today both the neuritis common in alcoholism and the cardiac changes present at times in the same cases are believed to be caused by the vitamin-B<sub>1</sub> deficiency. However, many have shown a polyneuritis before the circulatory changes entered the picture. The diets of many of these patients will be found to average well over 4000 calories, consequently they may appear to be well nourished in the presence of a grave deficiency.

It is important to remember that patients suffering from any type of cardiac disease may have a superimposed deficiency state, and congestive failure may be precipitated by this condition. Vitamin-B<sub>1</sub> deficiency should be suspected, particularly in alcoholic patients, when the cardiac findings fail to explain the signs and symptoms. A therapeutic test of the administration of the vitamin is in order.

### ILLUSTRATIVE CASES

The following histories are typical and illustrate types of B<sub>1</sub> deficiency that are occasionally met. In the first case the diagnosis was not made or suspected. The second patient, examined at a later date, was recognized, and proper treatment resulted in rapid improvement.

**Case 108.** T. M., age 68, a retired real estate operator lived on a quart of whiskey a day for two months prior to examination (1934). He complained of cough, progressive dyspnea, and edema.

**PHYSICAL EXAMINATION** showed a normal blood pressure, a pulse of 100 with frequent premature contractions, marked edema of face and legs and a questionable ascites. The heart was moderately enlarged to percussion in all diameters, and a blowing systolic murmur was present over the mitral area. Urine, complete blood count, and blood Wassermann reaction were negative.

**COURSE.** The patient was placed at bed rest and given digitalis and diuretics which had no effect on his circulatory symptoms. His supply of whiskey was difficult to control. Removal to a seashore rest home, elimination of the whiskey, and a normal diet quickly restored his balance. The type of circulatory failure was unexplained at this time. Follow-up examination of the patient (1939) revealed a normal cardiovascular system. His wife volunteered the statement that his symptoms recurred in their entirety the previous year when he "started drinking again and not eating for three months." A normal diet again efficiently removed all signs of congestive failure.

**Case 109.** J. C., age 39, a salesman, was treated for some years for peptic ulcer with the usual dietary restrictions. Gradual loss of weight resulted. He was first seen following a vacation during which he consumed considerable quantities of alcohol. He took very little solid food during the course of a month. He was unable to return to work at the end of this time because of palpitation, tachycardia, swelling of the hands, face and feet, and marked dyspnea. Previously his exercise tolerance had always been excellent and the history was negative for cardiac disease.

**PHYSICAL EXAMINATION.** The blood pressure was found to be low, the heart enlarged, and a systolic murmur was present over the aortic area. Blood count, Wassermann reaction, and urine were negative.

**COURSE.** Hypodermic injections of 30 milligrams daily of thiamin chloride rich in vitamin B<sub>1</sub> brought marked improvement. The patient returned 4 weeks. Subsequent roentgen ray examination revealed a duodenal ulcer. Further adjustment of his dietary regime.

## RICKETS AND SCURVY

Rickets may cause cardiac dilatation and failure. In children who die suddenly from this disease, ventricular dilatation is commonly found at autopsy. As a rule, rickets is not dangerous to life, but deformities may be lasting, and when they occur in the chest, they may be the cause of alterations in the position and function of the heart.

In scurvy, cardiovascular symptoms may arise secondary to the anemia not uncommon in this disease or hemorrhage into the pericardial sac. Death, in some cases, may be caused by cardiac failure. However, Weiss and Wilkins, analyzing a control group of 110 cases of scurvy uncomplicated by other types of vitamin deficiency, failed to find a single case exhibiting the circulatory abnormalities described here as suggestive of deficiency disease.<sup>330</sup>

by these patients over long periods. Today both the neuritis common in alcoholism and the cardiac changes present at times in the same cases are believed to be caused by the vitamin-B<sub>1</sub> deficiency. However, many have shown a polyneuritis before the circulatory changes entered the picture. The diets of many of these patients will be found to average well over 4000 calories, consequently they may appear to be well nourished in the presence of a grave deficiency.

It is important to remember that patients suffering from any type of cardiac disease may have a superimposed deficiency state, and congestive failure may be precipitated by this condition. Vitamin-B<sub>1</sub> deficiency should be suspected, particularly in alcoholic patients, when the cardiac findings fail to explain the signs and symptoms. A therapeutic test of the administration of the vitamin is in order.

### ILLUSTRATIVE CASES

The following histories are typical and illustrate types of B<sub>1</sub> deficiency that are occasionally met. In the first case the diagnosis was not made or suspected. The second patient, examined at a later date, was recognized, and proper treatment resulted in rapid improvement.

**CASE 108.** T. M., age 68, a retired real estate operator lived on a quart of whiskey a day for two months prior to examination (1934). He complained of cough, progressive dyspnea, and edema.

**PHYSICAL EXAMINATION** showed a normal blood pressure, a pulse of 100 with frequent premature contractions, marked edema of face and legs and a questionable ascites. The heart was moderately enlarged to percussion in all diameters, and a blowing systolic murmur was present over the mitral area. Urine, complete blood count, and blood Wassermann reaction were negative.

**COURSE.** The patient was placed at bed rest and given digitalis and diuretics which had no effect on his circulatory symptoms. His supply of whiskey was difficult to control. Removal to a seashore rest home, elimination of the whiskey, and a normal diet quickly restored his balance. The type of circulatory failure was unexplained at this time. Follow-up examination of the patient (1939) revealed a normal cardiovascular system. His wife volunteered the statement that his symptoms recurred in their entirety the previous year when he "started drinking again and not eating for three months." A normal diet again efficiently removed all signs of congestive failure.

**CASE 109.** J. C., age 39, a salesman, was treated for some years for peptic ulcer with the usual dietary restrictions. Gradual loss of weight resulted. He was first seen following a vacation during which he consumed considerable quantities of alcohol. He took very little solid food during the course of a month. He was unable to return to work at the end of this time because of palpitation, tachycardia, swelling of the hands, face and feet, and marked dyspnea. Previously his exercise tolerance had always been excellent and the history was negative for cardiac disease.

**PHYSICAL EXAMINATION.** The blood pressure was found to be low, the heart slightly enlarged, and a systolic murmur was present over the aortic area. Blood count, blood Wassermann reaction, and urine were negative.

**COURSE.** Hypodermic injections of 30 milligrams daily of thiamin chloride with a diet rich in vitamin B<sub>1</sub> brought marked improvement. The patient returned to work in two weeks. Subsequent roentgen ray examination revealed a duodenal ulcer necessitating a further adjustment of his dietary regime.

## THE SENILE HEART

Sleep after toil, port after stormy seas,  
Ease after war, death after life, does greatly please.  
—SPENSER, *The Faerie Queene*, Bk. i, Canto ix, st. 40.

Geriatrics deals with the problems of senescence and senility, and usually fails to attract physicians who are searching for special fields of research. While questions relating to infancy and childhood are completely studied by well-equipped hospital groups and described in separate journals, those connected with the sunset of life receive much less attention. However, there are many therapeutic items of importance in geriatric practice that deserve special consideration. Most of them are covered in the limited number of good treatises on the subject of geriatrics, and all are admirably summarized in a recent contribution by Pepper.<sup>293</sup> Only problems relating to the cardiovascular system will be briefly considered here.

## TYPES

The heart does not share the tendency to atrophy that is present in many other organs of the body as age advances; its relation to body weight remains the same. Older writers held the opposite view and believed that the heart and arteries underwent hypertrophy. Even among physicians of today there is a prevailing opinion that continued increase in the blood pressure takes place with advancing years. On the contrary, it has been found that the pressures show only slight elevation until the sixth decade and then remain unchanged in the absence of disease, the average pressure readings staying at 130 to 140 systolic and 80 to 90 diastolic. There is a slight decrease in the pulse rate in the later decades.

The change that may be clearly visualized in the senile aorta at the time of fluoroscopy is generally caused by a deposition of calcium in the *media*. *Similar alterations occur in the peripheral arteries and are associated with little interference in the passage of blood.* This condition of the *media* is known as Mönckeberg's sclerosis and should not be confused with atheroma.

ATHEROSCLEROSIS OR ATHEROMA involves the intima and may be present in younger individuals. Intimal deposits of lipoid material first appear and subsequently undergo softening with a discharge of their contents into the lumen of the vessel. An atheromatous ulcer then forms, and this lesion paves the way for thrombus formation and embolism. The aorta is the most frequent site of atheromatous lesions (see Fig. 111),

but their occurrence in the coronary arteries is of considerable more importance to the clinician (see Fig 107). Other types of heart disease (rheumatic, syphilitic or congenital) are practically unknown after 70 years of age.

While heart disease in old age is very closely allied to arterial degenerative changes, by no means all old people show advanced atheroma. On the other hand atheromatous changes of extensive degree are sometimes found in young individuals. Further discussion of the causes of this early degeneration of the vital arterial structures would lead us into deep water. Perhaps it is in some measure due to the speed of living of the person whose arterial inheritance is poor. It may appear earlier when tobacco and alcohol are used in excessive amounts. Degenerative changes, on the other hand, may be greatly delayed in those who use these substances in moderation, eat sparingly, and avoid the hurry and worry of modern existence. The speed of living is not so much in evidence among inhabitants of tropical and subtropical countries, and this may in part explain the lower incidence of hypertension and arterial disease in these regions.

## EXAMINATION

The examination of the heart in older patients is not easy. In the first place, there is usually a rigid thorax with more than a little accompanying emphysema, which makes it difficult or impossible to locate the apex beat. For the same reason, if percussion is attempted, the markings of the cardiac borders that are obtained are usually found to be unreliable. An orthodiagram or roentgenogram is quite often needed to determine accurately the cardiac size. In the aged, the heart sounds are many times recorded as "distant and weak," when frequently this change is only a result of the emphysema and in some instances the thickness of underlying tissues of the chest wall. Systolic murmurs that have little significance are often present.

If we study the anastomotic connections of the coronary tree, we note that they increase in number with advancing years. This accounts for the smooth course often observed when occlusions develop in old people. Frequently coronary changes progress to a marked degree without producing symptoms in aged individuals. Even thrombosis appearing as a complication during the course of this disease may be almost harmless. Mild degrees of angina in the aged are, as a rule, easily controlled mechanisms, and many of the cases are never seen by the physician for the reason that is usually stated: "At my age I shouldn't run to the doctor with every ache and pain. I expect to have a few."

Other subjective symptoms that may accompany the aging process are paroxysmal dyspnea, acute pulmonary edema, and congestive failure. Extrasystoles are present in many cases; in some instances they may be as common as the remaining gray hairs. They are seldom noticed by the



patient and are usually unimportant. Often they can be controlled if proper attention is given to the diet and elimination.

**Heart Failure.** Hypertension produces a left ventricular enlargement, and the signs of failure are apt to develop swiftly in some cases following very severe unaccustomed exertion. The right-sided failure of pulmonary heart disease may add cyanosis and venous engorgement to the picture.

A sclerosis of the heart valves takes place in old people, and at times it may advance to a considerable degree in the aortic valve with calcium deposition, particularly if the valve has been previously damaged by rheumatic invasion. The structure protrudes into the blood current in these instances, and produces a systolic murmur in the aortic area. A more advanced lesion may be accompanied by the typical signs of aortic stenosis (page 127).

**Aneurysms.** While aneurysms are as a whole uncommon in old age, the dissecting type may occasionally occur and cause sudden death. The dissecting aneurysm begins with a split in the intima, the blood column usually forcing its way through a necrotic area in the media, less often near the margin of an atheromatous patch. In this manner the aorta may be dissected in either direction by the column of blood. While rupture and death are the usual sequelae, in very rare cases organization may take place (page 322).

#### ELECTROCARDIOGRAM

Changes in the electrocardiogram may accompany the aging process. The voltage becomes reduced, the T-waves lowered, and the QRS complexes as well as the P-R intervals show slightly increased duration. Changes of this degree are not unusual in senescence. Levitt studied 100 men and women in the late decades of life whose histories and physical examinations revealed no evidence of heart disease and discovered that 26 per cent showed definite electrocardiographic abnormalities. Wilh<sup>109, 409, 414</sup> reviewed the electrocardiograms of 700 patients over the age of 74 and found that 55 per cent had abnormal tracings.

#### TREATMENT

The management of the aged patient who has cardiac disease requires tact, diplomacy, and skill. It is most important first of all that these patients should be encouraged to keep active and should not be permitted to remain in bed for long periods unless congestive failure or an acute coronary occlusion occurs. The physician fails to realize that old people like attention, and no matter how gloomy their prognosis, they should not be neglected in the daily rounds. It should be a constant rule of practice not to disturb their habits of living. We should not go to see them in haste with the attitude of a dictator and should not prohibit the old man (or woman) from smoking unless the circumstances in the case indicate the need for the step. The same applies to the diet. It should be

regulated with tact but much latitude should be allowed unless diabetes is present. In this event too severe a restriction of carbohydrate at the start will be likely to be followed by untoward symptoms. Fluid should not be restricted unless congestive failure is present. If obesity exists, we should not hound the patient to start a diet that may send him to his grave, but should be tolerant and congratulate him on the good cardiovascular apparatus that he possesses in spite of the handicap of age and weight. With this attitude, the essential changes in the daily program may be more readily instituted.

**Daily Regime.** Regulation of the daily regime is all the treatment that is required when mild degrees of structural change in the cardiovascular apparatus are discovered on routine examination. Mild dyspnea that is indicative of a decreased myocardial reserve may usually be controlled by adjusting the exercise allowance (Chapter 20). While the functional capacity of the heart is often reduced in the aged, this may not be evident because of the restrictions placed on activity either by advancing age or some accompanying degenerative process like arthritis. Although a reasonable amount of exercise is quite beneficial and is responsible many times for the ability of old people to carry on, unaccustomed or prolonged activity is unwise. The ranks of the Blue and the Gray always thin rapidly after the forced marches of Memorial Day or the unaccustomed activities of anniversary encampments.

**Drugs.** Great care should be exercised in the drugs that are given to aged patients, and too great therapeutic activity should be avoided at all times.

**DIGITALIS.** This is particularly true of digitalis, for toxic symptoms are apt to develop very early in the aged. While nausea and vomiting may occur following small doses, cerebral symptoms are very apt to appear (page 79). Even in the presence of congestive failure, digitalis should be given slowly and carefully, for older patients require much smaller doses. Digitalis should never be given to old people in the absence of congestive failure or fibrillation.

Before using mercurial diuretics, kidney function should be determined. In old men, an active diuresis may cause retention; so the output should be carefully watched following the administration of any of the organic mercurials. If prompt response to the diuretic is not obtained, always examine the patient for retention of urine and use an in-dwelling catheter when necessary.

GLUCOSE is of great value in the treatment of circulatory complications in the aged, particularly postoperatively and in the presence of congestive failure. It is also useful in combating attacks of paroxysmal cardiac dyspnea or cardiac asthma. Given intravenously in amounts up to 400 cc. of a 5 to 10 per cent solution, it furnishes food for the heart and helps to replace its glycogen store.

MORPHINE is a valuable drug in the treatment of the diseases that are commonly met in the declining years of life. We could not do without it

in the presence of inoperable cancer where the pain is great and life expectancy short. In heart disease morphine is justified in attacks of dyspnea of the paroxysmal type, but it should be used cautiously. Prescriptions for the common and less serious ailments of the aged should never contain morphine, particularly those that are written for bronchitis. The drug should always be used with care in pneumonias because of its tendency to produce or increase abdominal distention and to decrease pulmonary ventilation. In coronary occlusion morphine should be used in the presence of pain. Fenn<sup>99</sup> emphasizes the fact that morphine is more apt to sensitize the vagus and cause reflex coronary constriction and recommends papaverine and atropine. In some cases this combination may be entirely effective. In other instances it has to be supplemented by the use of small doses of morphine. Oxygen administration is of great value in the treatment of coronary occlusion (page 98).

SEDATIVES are many times indicated in geriatric practice, but the dose and the preparation should be chosen with care. The acquaintance of the physician with the patient and his habits of living should assist in answering the question as to the advisability of giving whiskey or brandy. I have found it valuable in treating cardiac patients of advanced years, particularly when the anginal syndrome is present. Many times it proves to be efficient when given at bedtime in place of the more commonly used preparations containing barbitol.

Sedatives of the barbitol group have been known to produce mild delirium in many instances, and care should be taken in the amounts that are prescribed for older patients. Sodium bromide may be substituted, but is less certain in its action. There is no objection to chloral hydrate or paraldehyde, and either of these may be used to replace the barbitol compounds.

**Blood Pressure.** Attempts to lower the blood pressure by medication of any type may result disastrously and should not be attempted in the aged, since the adjustments to sudden variations in the blood pressure are not as fine in the presence of sclerotic changes (see Case 46). Vertigo and syncope may result; or arterial thrombosis in cerebral, visceral or peripheral vessels may follow therapeutic efforts of the type that are attended by some slowing of the blood current. The increased viscosity of the blood in elderly individuals allows it to adhere readily to the vessel wall, and this ever-present factor favoring thrombosis should not be given a helping hand by the physician.

Angina may be completely controlled by regulation of the daily regime. If attacks are still experienced, small doses of nitroglycerine may be given (page 247). Theophylline ethylene diamine may also be tried (page 270).

**Heart Block.** When heart block is accompanied by Adams-Stokes seizures, satisfactory management is difficult and the prognosis is usually poor (page 401). Fibrillation in old people is apt to be accompanied by a slow ventricular rate, owing to the decreased power of conduction in the bundle of His. The presence of this natural block should make us hesitate to use digitalis if congestive manifestations are absent. Quinidine should

never be used to restore normal sinus rhythm in the presence of chronic auricular fibrillation in old people. On the other hand, quinidine may be life-saving in the presence of paroxysmal auricular or ventricular tachycardia.

**Delayed Shock.** Following even slight accidents old people may develop a syndrome that has been frequently referred to as delayed shock.<sup>320</sup> It begins a few days after the accident with symptoms suggestive of a gradual circulatory failure, and may terminate in bronchopneumonia. Consequently the prognosis of accidents, even of trivial character, should always be withheld for a few days until this danger period has passed. This delayed reaction is not difficult to explain. The bed rest restricts breathing, and this effect is usually augmented by one or more injections of morphine given for pain following the trauma. Stasis develops in the lower lobes of the lungs, and this places extra work on the heart. Cardiac failure may be precipitated by infection reaching these lung areas, as it often does without much delay unless unusual care is taken.

**Surgery.** There is an unfortunate tendency on the part of the profession to overrate the danger of surgery in old age. When the advisability of operation arises, the nature of the contemplated procedure and the cardiovascular status of the patient are usually the first considerations. In the common emergencies of old people (acute obstruction, acute prostatic retention, strangulated hernia) life-saving surgery must be recommended. However, when other operative procedures are contemplated, the deciding factor is not the actual age of the patient, but the physiologic and pathologic condition of the body as a whole and the circulation and mental state in particular. Elderly people should not be denied relief of "chronic inconveniences" just because of their age, for this does not mean that they are poor risks. Montgomery and Walters have recently emphasized this point in reporting a series of seven major operations in persons over 70 years of age. The patients in this group stood the major procedures very well and all were benefited.

If the altered physiologic processes of the aged patient are respected, a satisfactory course may be predicted following major surgery. It is important to carry out the operative procedures with speed and gentleness, and at the same time preserve body temperature and guard against hemorrhage. Old people cannot stand blood loss or shock as well as younger patients. While shock may appear more slowly, reaction to the usual measures for its relief is also a slow and uncertain process. However, old people usually make good patients for surgery. When confronted with an emergency operation, they display a much more placid outlook, very seldom fear death, and show little emotion. Moving the aged patient from the hospital to the customary surroundings of the home at the earliest possible time will often be a great aid in the prevention of postoperative circulatory complications.

All therapeutic measures, whether surgical or medical, should always be planned with the age of the patient in mind. A multiplicity of remedies, for

example, even though correctly applied, during the course of chronic heart failure, may result disastrously where more conservative therapy slowly and cautiously given may be quite efficacious. In this respect, when planning the management of a patient of advanced years, we should always recall the words of Oliver Wendell Holmes:

“so—don’t in mercy try  
To pump your patient absolutely dry.”

## SOCIAL SERVICE IN THE TREATMENT OF HEART DISEASE

By HELEN E. HEIKES\*

and

OLGA TATTERSFIELD§

The problems involved in the treatment of persons suffering from cardiovascular disease are common to both urban and rural communities. The first problem is the person who is unable to pay the physician's fees and laboratory costs at private rates, and it is this type of patient who applies for medical treatment in the heart clinics of the various hospitals of the larger cities. Most of these clinics are equipped to render the needed service at a charge within the means of the patient, or entirely without cost to him, if necessary. The clinic physician and his assistants examine the patient, make the diagnosis, and prescribe the treatment. However, successful medical treatment depends in some cases on the social factors involved. Consequently trained social workers are a necessary addition to the staff in all large hospitals. It is their function to help the patient utilize the prescribed medical treatment to the greatest advantage.

In a busy heart clinic, it is impossible for the physician to be familiar with the personality and social status of each patient. The physician outlines the regime of treatment, but often obstacles prevent proper execution of these plans. Success in treatment may depend on bed rest at home, convalescent care, a quiet environment, and freedom from anxiety, better nourishment, warmth, employment which will not tax the heart, and a host of other adjustments. The medical social workers concentrate most of their attention on these matters.

The first task of the worker is to individualize the patient for the physician. Then she supplements the physician's instructions by a detailed interpretation of every item of his diagnosis and treatment. It is vitally important for the patient to understand fully his physical condition so that his problems may not be complicated by unnecessary fear of chronic invalidism or sudden death. The social worker can also assist the patient in adjusting personality problems: frequently the patient has to be helped to express his fears, resentments, and bewilderments, before treatment can be carried on successfully. The patient can also be aided in utilizing his community resources with regard to school, his occupational and recre-

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ational life, and the development of all of his capacities as much as possible within his limitations.

In looking further into the many aspects of the social worker's role in combating heart disease, let us see what can be done about the child who has rheumatic heart disease. Although the medical needs are met by clinic or family physician, what other factors are involved in his care? Damp, over crowded homes, poor physical hygiene, and lack of proper nourishment are certainly not conducive to combating rheumatic infection. The child's school life is especially important. Children with heart disease should have the maximum opportunity for education, with due attention to vocational adaptation, in order that they may receive training for gainful occupations that will not prove too great a strain upon the heart muscle. Where school adjustments are necessary, the co-operation of the medical organization of the public school system as well as of the principal and teachers must be secured. These persons should be acquainted with the physical condition of the child and with the necessary adjustments that will enable him to carry out his school work successfully. Sometimes it is advisable to request the use of the school elevator, or to transfer the child to a classroom on the lower floor. Perhaps the child can easily climb the necessary stairs if allowed to take his time, going up and down either before or after the other children. Sometimes permission must be obtained to use recess periods for rest periods instead of for the purpose of recreation.

At home the child may be the victim of either over anxiety or indifference on the part of the parents. Other factors that hinder progress are lack of parental control, family friction, and the child's resentment of and refusal to accept exercise restrictions; also the use by the child of his physical disability as an "attention-getter" in his home and social group. Often the social worker must establish a direct relationship with the child in order to assist him in working out his problems. Where the home environment is such that the child cannot have adequate care, placement in a convalescent hospital or foster home may be necessary.

"The physician or clinic is but a hub in the wheel of cardiac treatment, and a great part of the problem of the cardiac child is the problem of the home and social and school life."<sup>50</sup>

With the adult, we have the problem not of prevention, but of adjustments necessary to keep the patient in such condition that he may lead a useful, contented life within his limitations. Here again the fear element must be overcome not only by the family but by the patient himself. Fear of lack of ability to provide for himself and for his dependents, fear of chronic invalidism, or of sudden death often retard progress. The readjustment of the economic status of the patient is also an important social factor in recovery. Very often the mother of a family needs help in her daily work, convalescent care must be provided, and in cases where the patient cannot return to his regular work, sheltered employment and occu-

pational therapy can be used to aid the process of rehabilitation. In some instances the patient can return to his former occupation provided some minor adjustments are made.

In the life of the cardiac patient recreational opportunities are important for both adults and children. It is vital in making the adjustment to the disease that the patient meet his associates on the basis of what he can do instead of on the level of what he is not permitted to do along recreational lines. Too often the cardiac patient tends to become withdrawn because he is too conscious of his physical limitations, and it requires skillful teamwork by the physician and the social worker to help the patient to substitute a more limited but satisfying type of recreation for the more active forms he once enjoyed.

The following case histories illustrate some of the situations in which the social worker functions in helping the patient to solve the problems that hinder medical treatment.\*

### ILLUSTRATIVE CASES

**Case 110.** Henry K., age eight, was referred to a heart clinic by the school doctor. A physical examination revealed a functional heart murmur, and the patient was placed in Class F. After the examination, his mother asked the doctor the result. He told her briefly that there was no cause for worry but that he would like to re-examine Henry in six to eight months. Four months later Henry contracted pneumonia and was admitted to the hospital. When the social worker interviewed the mother relative to the data the doctor needed to complete the picture of his patient, she learned that Henry was sullen and disobedient and had been absent without leave from school several times. The mother said that she had restricted his exercise, because he had heart trouble, forbade him to run, roller skate, swim, play ball, etc. The doctor had told her not to worry, but she had heard of people who dropped dead suddenly of heart disease, and the doctor would not want to examine Henry again if his heart was all right. The school doctor also had said that Henry had heart trouble.

The social worker was able to explain to this bewildered mother that Henry had no organic heart lesion, that there was no reason to restrict the boy's exercise. She also made clear why the doctor had requested the re-examination. The mother accepted the explanation and allowed Henry to assume his usual activities after he had recovered from his illness. When he returned to cardiac clinic, the worker went with him and his mother to the doctor, and at the examination Henry was discharged from the clinic. The mother had an opportunity to talk with the doctor and later with the social worker, and said that she understood and was entirely satisfied. Needless to say, Henry's behavior problems did not return, and he was leading a normal life when last seen.

**Discussion.** This illustrates the average person's conception of heart disease and the damage which can be done to the individual unless he has adequate interpretation and help from the physician and the social worker.

**Case 111.** Edith Y., age 11. Diagnosis: chorea, Class F.

Edith was brought to the hospital acutely ill with chorea and was admitted. The mother disturbed the hospital administration by walking up and down in front of the

\* We wish to thank the Social Service Departments of the Graduate, Pennsylvania, St. Christopher's, and Woman's College Hospitals of Philadelphia and the Placement Service of the Philadelphia Health Council and the Tuberculosis Committee for the case records used in this chapter.



hospital several hours each day, although she could visit only once weekly. On being questioned, the mother stated that she could not help herself. The doctor explained to the parents the child's diagnosis and told them that she needed prolonged rest, that there was no heart damage then, and that complete recovery was likely. The case was referred to the Social Service Department by the physician, and an appointment was made to see the mother. Both parents were very emotional. The mother had hyperthyroidism, and the husband was a stubborn German type. The father blamed the mother for the child's illness, and the mother blamed the lack of proper food. The worker had to make the parents understand that the hospital did not consider that Edith was ill because of her care at home, that the cause of chorea is unknown, but that it can be controlled by proper treatment. The parents wished to take the child home against advice several times, but after an interview with the social worker, they revised their decision.

In view of the friction in the home, the doctor recommended a long period of convalescent care for the child. After much work on the part of the social service department and the physician, the child was allowed to go, the parents at first refusing because they did not wish Edith to be away from home any longer. One month later Mrs. Y. informed the social worker that she was taking Edith from the Children's Heart Hospital since her husband was out of work and could not pay the board rate. The social worker interviewed the hospital and arranged that the charge for board be cancelled so that Edith could remain as long as necessary. Upon Edith's return to heart clinic after discharge from the convalescent home, her condition was good and the parents followed the doctor's recommendations for her home care as interpreted by the social worker.

**Discussion.** In this case the value of the social worker is seen:

- (1). In acquainting the parents with the nature of the child's illness and so preventing withdrawal of the patient from the hospital before convalescence was complete.
- (2). In arranging for continued convalescent care at the Heart Hospital.
- (3). In interpreting to the mother the doctor's recommendations for the final home care which are at present being carried out.

**Case 112.** Roger M., age 11 years, had been a patient in heart clinic for several years, suffering from rheumatic heart disease. His exercise was quite restricted, and he had little opportunity for school because of long periods in the hospital and equally long periods of bed rest in convalescent hospitals. This enforced inactivity bred resentment, and he became a thorn in the side of the authorities at several convalescent homes. When a third hospitalization became necessary, Roger broke out into violent rebellion and temper tantrums.

The medical social worker and the physician reviewed the situation and what it meant to Roger. The boy's home life was troubled and insecure. The father, a weak and inadequate person, drank to excess and sought to maintain his status as head of the house by bullying his family. The mother, a worn-out household-drudge, tried to work with the hospital, but her efforts were confined to nagging Roger about overstepping his exercise prescriptions. Two older sisters added their voices to the family chorus of disapproval of Roger's conduct, which merely served to increase the boy's resentment against the family, the hospital, and the world where all forces seemed to be gathered against him.

It was evident that Roger could not reach an adjustment in such an environment. Likewise a return to a convalescent home held no solution to his problem, since he was fighting institutionalization and restriction and was having little opportunity for education. Foster home placement seemed worth trying, and the situation was discussed with an excellent local agency. They finally agreed to make placement upon a medical basis, Roger continuing his medical care in heart clinic as before.

This plan was discussed with Roger and his parents as a medical plan recommended by

the physician, and they agreed to it. Roger was accordingly placed in a foster family, gradually resumed activity, went to school, and was seen regularly in heart clinic. Throughout this period away from home he was visited by his family, and his relationship to them was kept always before him. It required several years and three changes of home before Roger was able to work through his problems and make a real adjustment to his disease, but he finally was considered well enough and sufficiently balanced emotionally to return home, where he has been for several years. He managed to regain his standing in school and now enjoys life with a much increased exercise tolerance. In addition, he has a recognized place in the family and community.

**Discussion.** This case shows how serious behavior problems may result at times from over-institutionalization and from lack of understanding in the home. Individualizing the boy in a foster home with understanding foster parents focused his attention upon his possibilities instead of his handicap so that he realized himself as a part of society instead of one cut off from his fellows by an arbitrary restriction.

**Case 113.** Edward A., colored, age 11 years, was referred to the heart clinic from medical clinic, where a diagnosis of rheumatic heart disease was made. The boy was underweight and malnourished and had developed behavior problems at school. The home background was lacking in what we consider good child care. Edward was an illegitimate child, his mother was employed by day and was often absent from home at night. Edward was irregular in his school attendance, was disobedient, disturbed the classroom by antics designed to get attention, pilfered small amounts of money from his mother, and ran the streets until late at night. The physician in heart clinic referred the problem to the social worker and the boy to neuropsychiatric clinic.

Edward was found to have an I.Q. of 114, and although a year younger than the other children in his class at school, was able to do the required work. He had lived with his maternal grandmother until her death and had been with his mother only ten months and was practically the only colored child in the neighborhood. His mother gained a degree of understanding of the factors unbalancing the boy's life and decided to give up her work and stay at home, a paramour having come into the picture who was willing to support mother and child and for whom Edward had developed a real affection as a father substitute. Edward was transferred to another school and did well for a time because teachers and principal interested themselves in his adjustment. When they relaxed their attentions, Edward's behavior problems gradually reappeared. His mother came to the social worker for help because Edward was fighting with the other children, missing school, stealing, and she thought his health must be poor and that "there was something wrong with his mind." The situation was discussed with the physician on the basis of the child's heart condition, while the need of better home supervision and a plan for a foster home placement was worked out with the mother. The services of the placement agency were enlisted, and Edward was established in a foster home where the foster parents had a good understanding of boys, their needs and problems. Since placement Edward has gained considerable weight, his heart has definitely improved, and behavior problems are no longer in the picture. He gets along well with other children, and the school authorities have no complaints. He maintains contact with his mother, who visits him frequently.

**Discussion.** This picture shows a bright, alert colored boy suddenly thrust into an unstable home atmosphere after the death of his grandmother who had reared him. Lack of parental supervision, unwholesome family relationships and isolation in a community where white people predominated gave rise to the personality difficulties which manifested themselves in antisocial behavior. Efforts to help Edward to become adapted to

this environment failing, foster home care was carried out, and the boy responded to love and a stable home environment, although maintaining contact with his mother.

**Case 114.** Julia G., age 12. Diagnosis: rheumatic heart disease with mitral stenosis.

The findings of the cardiologist and the recommendations for convalescent care were discussed by the social workers with the parents, and a plan was formulated whereby Julia was admitted to the Children's Heart Hospital. She remained there for four months, returning home at the end of that time.

Julia lived with her family of seven persons in a congested section of the city, in a small house which was in fairly good condition. Her parents were Irish-American, took an intelligent interest in Julia's care and tried in every way to work with the doctor and social worker. After Julia's discharge from the Heart Hospital, she came regularly to clinic, and the parents tried to limit her activity, but she was restless, and showed a continuous temperature and weight loss that finally necessitated a second hospital admission. Convalescent care was again advised, the parents agreed, and Julia was re-admitted to the Heart Hospital, where she stayed for eight months. She returned to school and was placed in a nutrition class at the request of the doctor in heart clinic, but again she lost weight and did not do well in classes. Her father was so fearful of school by this time that conference with the physician of the Board of Education was arranged for him by the social worker, and the child was allowed to remain at home for the rest of the school year (three months). In July she was sent to the Children's Seashore House for three weeks.

Julia started school again in September, did well, and reported regularly to heart clinic during the next year and had few set-backs. She soon began going to dances and lived a normal social life. Her cardiac status improved during the next few years. At the age of 19 she married. Her first baby was stillborn. When her second baby was expected, she came to the social worker with the request for assistance in obtaining prenatal care and hospital delivery. Satisfactory arrangements were made for her hospital delivery. Following this she had two other children, has no symptoms referable to the cardiovascular system and now is leading a happy, normal life.

**Discussion.** This case is illustrative of the value of intelligent participation by parents and child in a regime of medical care that is formulated by the physician and carried out with the help of the social worker. Long-term convalescent care and supervision helped to arrest rheumatic activity in this case, and the patient led a normal happy life within limitations that were understood and accepted.

**Case 115.** Eleanor M., age nine, was admitted to the heart clinic because of malnourishment and active rheumatic heart disease. Investigation of the home environment showed that her mother and father were constantly bickering and had no conception of the child's needs, placing upon her all the responsibility for rest and care. Since manifestly the child could not progress under such conditions, convalescent care at the Children's Heart Hospital was arranged. In a few months the parents demanded the child's return, as they were on relief and sought this means of having their grant increased. The parents' demands were discussed with the chief of the cardiac clinic, and he was willing to have Eleanor return home provided she would be kept in bed. Eleanor accordingly returned home, and a visiting nurse was called in to give her bedside care. Milk and additional food for the child were provided by a private family agency. The nurse soon reported that she found that the continuous quarreling of the parents was affecting the child and retarding her recovery. The social worker arranged an interview for the father with the chief of the cardiac clinic, who explained to the father the importance of quiet and restfulness for the child at home, while the social worker brought out similar points in a talk with the mother. The parents agreed to give

Eleanor a room to herself away from family disturbances, and an occupational therapist was also sent in to help her during her enforced rest. The child is improving steadily at this time, and her exercise tolerance has increased.

**Discussion.** This case history again illustrates how family friction can retard a child's recovery, and how the social worker can help both parents and the child to a better adjustment.

**Case 116.** John H., a boy of 16, was referred to the Social Service Department of the hospital where he was attending heart clinic, by the clinic physician, to see what could be arranged to enable him to go on with his art work at which he showed great aptitude. The boy's family consisted of an indolent father, who would not work, a mother, who did day's work when she could get it, and a sister of 17, who worked regularly and practically supported the entire family. The father wanted John to leave school and get a job to help in the support of the family. The doctor felt that John needed sedentary work as he had very definite heart damage and could not stand any form of manual labor. The social worker discussed this with the family and after many visits persuaded the father to let John go on with his studies provided a scholarship could be secured for him. She then took this problem to the local heart association, and together they secured a scholarship for John in art school. An interested person offered to pay for the supplies he needed, and his sister consented to pay his carefare and incidental expenses.

John spent three years at art school and did very well; he received prizes for his prints and honorable mention for his charcoal work. After he finished his training, a position was secured for him with a firm of engravers, but this work proved too arduous and his health began to suffer. He was forced to give it up. However, he proved to be an energetic boy and soon secured some art work on his own time. He is at present free-lancing and making a good living for himself and his parents. The sister has married and left the home, and John is supporting himself and his parents adequately.

**Case 117.** William G., age 19, when referred to cardiac clinic by the eye clinic, was found to be suffering from advanced rheumatic heart disease. The social worker interviewed William and at his request referred him to the Bureau of Rehabilitation as his heart condition prevented laborious work. The bureau gave no encouragement to the patient about training for work within his activity limitation. He was dependent upon his sister, who was resentful of having to provide for him and their mother, and made life very unpleasant for both. Through the efforts of the social worker in heart clinic, a training course at a school of occupational therapy was secured for William, and a job provided at the end of the training course by the Shut-In Society. At this time he developed pneumonia and was admitted to the hospital. He was greatly worried about his job until the social worker told him that she had found that it would be open for him when he recovered. He returned home and to work. Later he was upset and despondent when his mother became ill. After her recovery, the patient was in such a poor condition through anxiety that the clinic physician recommended convalescent care, and William agreed to go to a convalescent home. In the meantime the sister, who was the disturbing element in the family, moved away, and William and his mother now live a much happier, peaceful life, although he is at the present time still unable to go back to work, and he and his mother are living on a relief grant. The clinic physician feels, however, that if William continues to improve under the better home conditions, in time he will be able to resume work and be self-supporting.

**Case 118.** Henry G., 29 years old, a patient in heart clinic, was referred to the Social Service Department by the chief of clinic, to see if some plan could be worked out whereby Henry could earn a living for himself and his family, which consisted of his wife and three small children. His physician stated that the work he was doing in a leather factory was much too strenuous. The social worker referred Henry to an employment bureau for the handicapped, and the placement worker there finally secured a job for

the patient in another factory, making small suitcases and bags. It was a finishing job, and Henry could sit down while working. He has been with this firm for about seven years, and is doing well physically as well as economically.

**Case 119.** William N., an unemployed laborer of 66 suffering from hypertensive cardiovascular disease, was referred to the Social Service Department by a clinic physician to see if some work could not be secured for him to do at home. The patient's heart was not able to stand the strain of employment outside the home, but the physician felt that he needed something to keep him occupied. The patient lived with a married daughter and her family, who had quite a struggle to get along financially. The social worker made arrangements for an occupational therapist to visit William and teach him to do some handicraft. He was interested in learning to make hooked rugs, and soon became very proficient, working on a frame placed in front of his chair at an angle so that there was no strain on his arms. William worked at rug-making for about three years, filling orders that the occupational therapist helped to secure for him, and earned between \$15 and \$30 a month. This money was a great help to his daughter as he was able to pay his board, and he was happy and contented in his work. William died three years later, but we believe that this work probably prolonged his life, since he had been restless and unhappy before he undertook it.

**Case 120.** Mrs. T. This patient, a widow of 42, was a foreigner who spoke very good English. She was referred to heart clinic from the general medical clinic. It was found that she had an advanced cardiac lesion and could not continue the domestic service in which she had been engaged. She had no relatives in this country and no one to help her financially. Upon the physician's recommendation she was admitted to the hospital for a period of several weeks and then sent to a convalescent home in the country for a month's stay. The social worker, meanwhile, got in touch with a family agency and succeeded in getting a temporary weekly grant. The worker then referred the patient to an employment agency for the handicapped. A vocational guidance test at the local university proved that she was capable of business training. A scholarship to a business college was then provided, and a room was secured for her near the business school. The patient quickly and successfully completed the course of study, and a job was secured for her by an employment agency. The family agency withdrew its grant as the patient became self-supporting. At the last report the patient had become a valued member of an office staff, was happy and satisfied in her work, and had entered into the social activities of her community.

**Discussion.** Had the services of the social worker not been available, this patient could not have made use of the valuable community resources, as she knew nothing of such services. Her medical treatment, therefore, could not have been satisfactory either to doctor or to patient.

The foregoing case histories are illustrative of the many social factors which complicate life for the cardiac patient and handicap medical treatment. They show also how the physician and the social worker function in the interest of the patient. The physician, in the conduct of a busy clinic, must necessarily relegate the social treatment of the patient to the medical social worker. From this point there must be close co-operation between worker and physician in the patient's interest. The physician's responsibility is to outline treatment; the social worker's duty is to individualize the patient to the physician, to consult with the physician, and to keep him informed as to the progress of the medical-social plan.

The social worker has an allied responsibility to the patient: to interpret the diagnosis and medical treatment to him, to help him to use hospital and community resources to further his medical treatment, and to

aid him in working out the personality problems which may be blocking his adjustment to a physical limitation. She can function, however, insofar as the patient is conscious of his need and desires her help. Often she sees more than one problem as she analyzes the patient's social situation, but she can work only with the problem that the patient sees as the immediate one.

This physician-social worker relationship is necessary in clinic work. As stated before, the physician in rural or small urban communities has the advantage of a closer relationship to his patients and a much less complicated community organization. He goes into the homes of his patients and sees them as individuals in their respective family and community groups. In these instances the physician can more easily help the patients *to work out their adjustments*, as he has *ready access to community resources*. His personal interest in helping his patients to make adjustments and to solve the problems that hinder medical treatment is a part of the art of medical practice. It can never be successfully replaced by bureaus or agencies under state control.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF  
ELECTROCARDIOGRAPHY

## HISTORY

It has been stated that the history of any science is the science itself. Consequently there is no better means of approach to the subject of electrocardiography than a review of the steps by which it reached its present state.<sup>200</sup> From small beginnings in the laboratory to the ultimate perfection of an instrument of great value at the bedside, the story winds through nearly 150 years. The contributions of many investigators made possible the final work of Einthoven, who introduced the instrument into clinical medicine.

Electrocardiography is based upon the fundamental physiologic fact that the contraction of a muscle is accompanied by a minute electrical current. Therefore, if we desire to go back to the beginning, we should examine the earliest experiments in electrophysiology. These were made by Luigi Galvani toward the end of the eighteenth century. Of course, the indefatigable John Hunter studied animal electricity in 1773, using the torpedo or electric ray fish. This peculiar property of the fish was not discovered by him, however, for we read that the Romans were aware of it and for this reason made some use of the fish therapeutically. Caldani likewise performed several experiments on the electrical stimulation of the cerebral cortex as early as 1784. However, Galvani's work, because of its completeness and conclusiveness, marks the real beginning of our knowledge.

Galvani was a distinguished professor of anatomy at the University of Bologna, and early in his career became very much interested in animal electricity. Quite by accident, in 1791, he placed a dissected frog on a laboratory table near an electric machine. It was a fortunate circumstance, but the interpretation of the result had been waiting for a man of Galvani's insight and ability. As an assistant lightly touched the nerves of the frog's leg with the point of a knife, Galvani observed that the muscles were thrown into vigorous contraction.

Galvani was very much interested and curious, and he was determined to find out if lightning would produce the same effect. One day during a thunder storm he dissected a frog and attached it to a conductor. He connected the feet of the frog to a wire which he grounded into the water of a nearby well. Galvani observed that:

The results came about as we wished. As often as the lightning

broke forth, the muscles were thrown into repeated violent contractions so that always as the lightning lighted the sky, the muscle contractions and movements preceded the thunder and, as it were, announced its coming. It was best, however, when the lightning was strong or the clouds from which it broke forth were near the place of the experiment.

This experiment opened up a wide field for investigation. Galvani later discovered that when one of his frogs was placed on a metallic plate and the hook piercing its spinal column was brought in contact with the plate, a twitching occurred. He repeated the experiment and in place of the metal plate he used glass, and the twitching disappeared. He also learned that if the frog rested on a glass plate and he touched both the nerve and the muscle with a bent rod consisting of two different metals, prolonged convulsions followed. In these simple experiments Galvani produced the first cell in history for generating electricity.

The next advance was made by Carlo Matteucci who first demonstrated the rheoscopic frog effect (1842). In this experiment, if the sciatic nerve of one leg of a frog is placed upon the muscles of the opposite leg, the muscles of both legs may be made to contract by simply stimulating the sciatic nerve on the normal side. The essential point for us to remember about this contribution in connection with electrocardiography is the fact that the second muscle was not stimulated directly by the current applied to the nerve but indirectly by the current of action generated in the muscle in consequence of its contraction.

The time soon arrived for an application of this knowledge to the heart. In 1856, Albert von Kölliker and Muller discovered that the tiny frog's heart, exposed and contracting on their laboratory table, produced an electric current which accompanied each beat. This fact they established, but at the time very little practical use could be made of it because of the crude apparatus available for additional investigation.

It was not until 1878 that further progress was made by two English physiologists, Sanderson and Page. These workers successfully recorded for the first time the minute heart current, described by von Kölliker and Muller, by means of the capillary electrometer. This instrument consists of a column of mercury in a vertical glass tube, the end of which dips into sulfuric acid. These investigators noted that if an electric current, no matter how small, disturbs the relation between the mercury and the acid, the slender column of mercury moves to a new position in the tube. This response of the mercury column to the electric current was photographed by Sanderson and Page on a moving sensitive plate.

However, even the physiologists found that the capillary electrometer was a delicate, temperamental instrument. It was no easy task to make it operate successfully, and at times it must have sorely tried the patience of the laboratory workers. Then, too, the hearts under investigation had



to be connected directly to the instrument, which made the study a matter of laboratory interest only.

In 1887, Waller made the important discovery that the heart's currents could be demonstrated without opening the chests of the laboratory animals. He merely connected the outside of the body to the capillary electrometer by electrodes. These wire connections were later to become known as "Leads." Waller immediately applied this idea to man and found that here, too, the delicate heart current could be led off the arms and legs of his subjects.

So far in our survey we see that the scientists had shown a small current to be present when the heart contracted; they had found a way to measure it crudely, and Waller showed that the current could be led off the arms and legs of the subject. However, the troublesome capillary electrometer remained. The acid and the mercury had their faults and shortcomings. The mercury possessed inertia, and the curves of its movements, when photographed, were not true curves. The hard-pressed physiologists had to correct their experiments for the mercury inertia by mathematical computations. Surely the practitioner of medicine could not be expected to carry out such work; so this valuable method of study had to remain in the laboratory.

The years were quickly passing, and the century was almost spent. Many discoveries of more dramatic and of a more practical nature were taking the attention of the physicians. New germs were being described, antisepsis was coming into vogue; in fact, medical discoveries were pouring in on the bewildered doctors from all quarters with the rapidity of corn popping in a pan. Consequently the progress made in the registration of the heart's current remained far below the clinical horizon.

With the turn of the century the man destined to bring the method out of the shadow arrived on the scene. The year was 1903, the place Leyden, Holland, the man Willem Einthoven, whose final contribution made electrocardiography a clinical reality. His work enabled scientists to discard the capillary electrometer and use in its place for recording the heart's current the much more rugged and reliable string galvanometer. This instrument had already been invented by J. S. C. Schweigger of the University of Halle, but Einthoven perfected it and applied it to the measuring of the electric current generated by the heart's contraction.

He found that the delicate quartz string contained in the galvanometer moved more quickly and did not have the lag of the mercury. This observation gave us at last a practical method of electrocardiography. With Einthoven's use of the galvanometer in place of the capillary electrometer, the journey of the method from the laboratory to the bedside took just a few years. The scientific study of diseases of the heart then began in earnest.

The original apparatus of Einthoven was very large and cumbersome. The magnet was of considerable size and the string that was mounted be-

tween its poles was an intricate mechanism. The original instruments took up considerable space, and the details of their operation discouraged the ordinary clinical worker. For this reason few hospitals had electrocardiographs prior to 1905-06. About this time Sir Thomas Lewis began to use the electrocardiograph in England, and the popularity of the method at the end of the first decade of the present century was largely a result of his efforts. As the century grew older, the instrument was simplified, and more and more was learned of its usefulness. The improved instrument was made to occupy less space in the laboratory until more compact and easily portable electrocardiographs for bedside work became a reality.

Today the clinician leans heavily on the electrocardiograph. In some cardiac conditions a tracing is essential before a final diagnosis can be made. Moreover, the electrocardiogram tells a great deal concerning the progress of patients and guides the administration of certain drugs. Its future is bright. The tiny current produced by the frog's heart in van Kolliker's laboratory in Wurzburg in 1856 opened up a large field for scientific study and research which is broadening year by year. The ultimate extent of its progress is a matter of pure conjecture as new depths are being plumbed and new uses are being discovered for the method by clinicians as well as by laboratory workers.

## THE APPARATUS

Let us now examine the essential features of the modern electrocardiograph (Fig 164). The lamp (L) sends a beam of light through a condens-

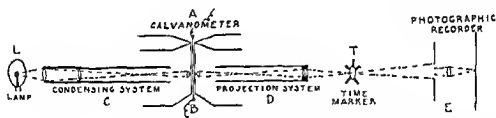


FIG. 164. A simplified diagram showing the essential parts of an electrocardiograph of the string galvanometer type. See text for description.

ing system (C). This is focused on the galvanometer string (A-B) stretched in an electromagnetic field between the poles of two powerful electromagnets. When the heart current of the patient is passed through this fine quartz string, the string moves across the gap at right angles to the lines of magnetic force, and its shadow is magnified as it passes through the projection system (D) and falls on the moving strip of film in the camera at E. At T a time marker interrupts the beam of light at intervals of 0.04 second, and these vertical markings appear on the developed strip of film (Fig. 165). This is the principle of the instruments that contain a string galvanometer. For a more detailed description of the construction of the

various types of electrocardiographs, the reader is referred to the special texts on the subject.<sup>6, 227</sup>

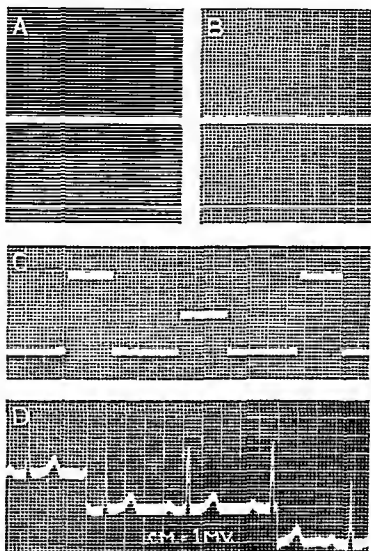


FIG. 165. A. Shadow of the string. The time marker is not running. B. Same with the time marker running. Note the presence of vertical lines that indicate the time markings. C. Standardizing string tension before introducing the patient into the circuit. Note the deflections of the string caused by one and two millivolts. D. Normal electrocardiogram (Lead I). Note the standardization. The introduction of 1 mv. deflects the string exactly one cm.

In the early days a very large room in the hospital was assigned to the Heart Department to accommodate the equipment. Electrocardiographs were big and cumbersome, repairs were difficult and a finished record was

an achievement. Today most models are rugged, easily operated by a technician and seldom present the mechanical difficulties that made the early workers in this field true pioneers. Figure 166 shows a model in common use today. A glance will show the general principle of its construction since its various parts are designated by the same letters used

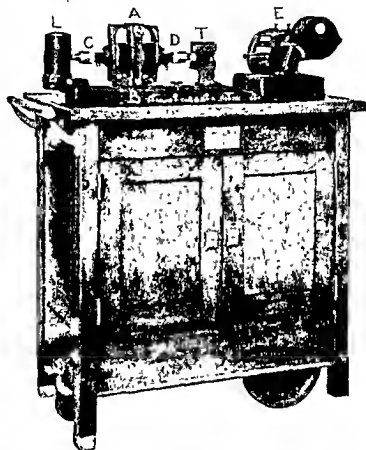


FIG. 166. Modern mobile type electrocardiograph containing string galvanometer. The letters correspond to those of Fig. 164. (Courtesy, Cambridge Instrument Co.)

in the schematic drawing. Recently, smaller, more compact models that can be readily carried to the bedside of the patient have been perfected (Fig. 167).

There is a difference in the construction of some of these instruments that deserves mention. Perfection of the amplifier tube has made it possible to magnify many times the current derived from the patient. This permits the use of a less delicate galvanometer. Instead of photographing the motions of the string, these newer instruments record the motion of a beam of light reflected from a mirror contained in the

galvanometer (Fig. 168). At present there are several models on the market that employ this principle. They are small, serve readily at the bedside and appear to be as suitable as the original models containing the more delicate string galvanometer. The electrocardiograms obtained from the two types of instruments are identical; the amplification of the heart current apparently does not distort the individual waves. A recent addition to the electrocardiograph that has appeared is a compact system for recording the heart sounds simultaneously with the electrocardiogram (pages 23, 584).



FIG 167. A bedside tracing using portable model electrocardiograph. (Courtesy, Children's Heart Hospital and Cambridge Instrument Co.)

An addition to one of the amplifying types of electrocardiographs recently placed on the market is the "Cardioscope." This attachment makes possible the reproduction of the image of the electrocardiogram on a moving fluorescent screen or drum (Fig. 169). The electrocardiogram can be seen by looking through the window of the instrument, and the reading may be made at once. Time and amplitude lines are thrown on the screen when desired by means of a switch. The Cardioscope makes it possible to secure a constant viewing of the heart's action during the course of a long surgical operation or animal experiment and consequently saves considerable film. A tracing, however, may be recorded at any time if the physician detects an interesting event in the electrocardiogram on the moving drum. In cases of suspected coronary occlusion this instrument also

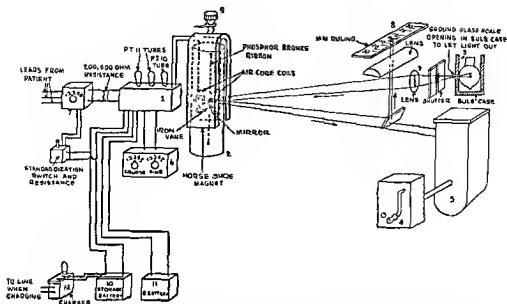


FIG. 168. Diagram illustrating principles of electrocardiograph of the vacuum tube type. The current from the patient passes through amplifier (1) and then to a galvanometer of special design (2). The galvanometer contains a mirror which reflects a beam of light from source (1). As the galvanometer responds to the amplified heart current it causes the beam of light to move across the film in the camera (5) (Courtesy, General Electric Co.)



FIG. 169. The cardioscope. (Courtesy, Sanborn Company.)

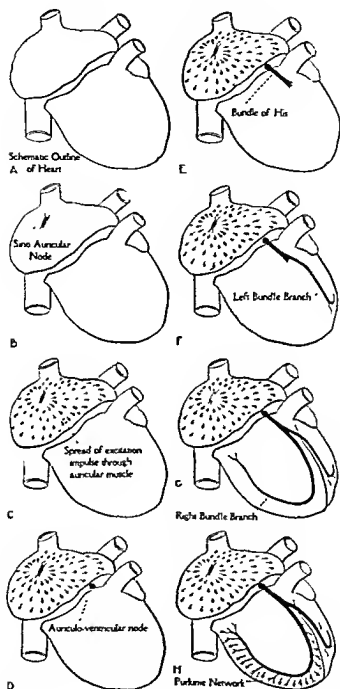


FIG. 170. Schematic diagrams representing component parts of the conduction system of the heart. See text for explanation.

enables the investigator to note the electrocardiogram obtained by using various points of contact on the chest wall and to record on the film only the complexes that appear to be most useful in the diagnosis.

### PHYSIOLOGIC PRINCIPLES

The chambers of the heart contract in sequence following an excitation wave that passes down the specialized tissue of the conduction system (Fig. 170). The impulse for cardiac contraction originates in the sino-

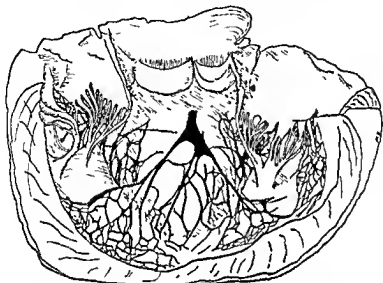


FIG 171. India ink injection of beef heart showing the conduction system.

auricular node (synonyms: sinus node, the Keith-Flack node, the S-A node, the pacemaker). This is a vascularized island of special tissue situated high up on the posterior wall of the right auricle (B). The impulse passed from here into the muscle of the auricle. There is no special pathway for conducting this impulse through the auricular musculature, consequently the wave spreads equally in all directions (C).

Another clump of specialized tissue, the auriculo-ventricular node (synonyms: A-V node, node of Aschoff and Tawara), next receives the impulse (D). From here it travels down the bundle of His (E) and is distributed equally to each ventricle through the right and left branches of the bundle (F and G), finally arriving at the terminal ramifications of the system, the Purkinje network (H) lining the inner ventricular wall. The spread of the impulse is now complete.

Although the human heart does not lend itself readily to a demonstration of this conduction system, the ox heart, with the proper technic and a little patience, may be injected to show the entire system. If the fresh



ox heart is allowed to stand for 12 hours at room temperature, the slight shrinkage that follows early degeneration about the specialized conduction tissue will permit the passage of injection fluid. The needle of a syringe containing 5 cc. of India ink is then inserted into the upper part of the

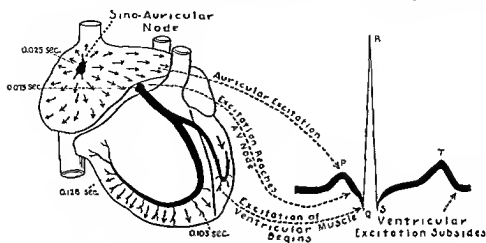


FIG 172. Diagram illustrating relationship between the spread of the excitation impulse and the electrocardiogram. The figures represent the time intervals.

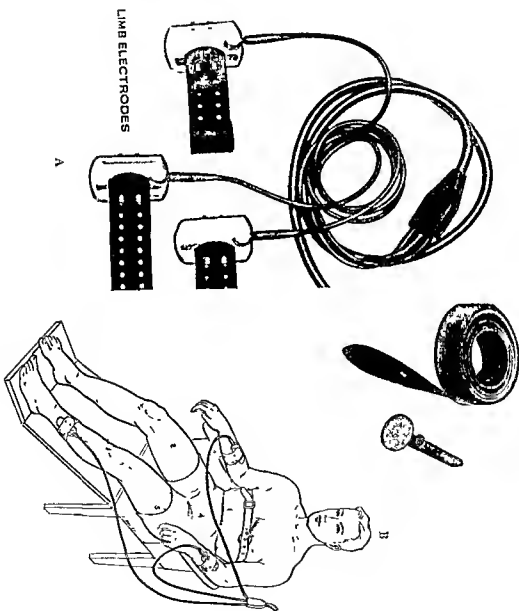
bundle. A slight amount of pressure forces the ink along this dead space, and the whole conduction system will be strikingly outlined (Fig. 171).

The waves of the electrocardiogram are produced by the spread of the excitation impulse and are in no way related to the strength of the ensuing cardiac contraction. These waves were originally named by Einthoven,



FIG. 173. Sound tracing and electrocardiogram simultaneously recorded by Sanborn Stetho-cardiette. A. Speed of paper 75 mm per second B. Speed of paper 25 mm. per second. (Courtesy Sanborn Company.)

in purely empirical fashion, P, Q, R, S, and T. Figure 172 shows the relationship between the spread of the impulse and the electrocardiogram. As the electrical excitation passes through the auricular muscle, the P or auricular wave is inscribed in presystole. The string then returns to the base line. With the upstroke of the R-wave, the auricular cycle (or auricular complex) ends. The ventricular cycle (or complex) usu-



ally opens with a small initial downward dip of the string or Q-wave, followed by an upward R-wave. Again the string returns to the base line. At this point a small dip below this level may be observed. This downward deflection is the S-wave. A broad, blunt upright wave is next inscribed; this is known as the T-wave. Rarely, an additional smaller, and usually unimportant, wave may follow the T-wave. This is known as the U-wave and is produced by the events of early diastole (see Fig. 175).

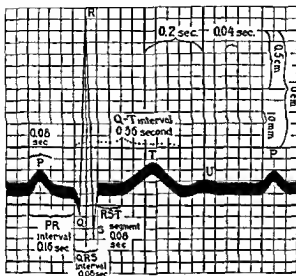


FIG. 175. The electrocardiogram, single lead. (From *Essentials of Electrocardiography*, Ashman and Hull, Macmillan Company, N. Y.)

In Fig. 173 we will see the relationship between the electrocardiogram and the heart sounds of a normal subject. Note that the peak of the R-wave is recorded before the first sound of the heart is heard at the apex. The second sound of the heart immediately follows the T-wave.

As previously stated, any two parts of the body with the heart between them may be chosen as points of contact for leading the current of the heart from the body. These "leads" are three in number, and for convenience the arms and the left leg are used. The waves of the electrocardiogram vary in relation to the location of the electrodes on the body surface. Lead 1 is obtained by placing the German silver electrodes on the arms (Fig. 174). This is usually done by rubbing the skin at the point of contact with a small amount of a special jelly. Lead 2 represents the curve obtained when the current passes through the string galvanometer from the right arm to the left leg, and lead 3 results when the left arm and the left leg are connected. Using three leads in each case gives a better tracing of cardiac events than any single lead. Additional precordial leads are obtained by placing the electrodes directly on the chest. These special direct leads will be considered in detail later (page 637).

## THE ELECTROCARDIOGRAM

We will now turn our attention to a study of the details of the electrocardiogram. First of all, it should be noted (Fig. 175) that the smallest squares in the blocks represent 0.04 second in the horizontal direction. In the vertical direction each block represents a potential difference of 0.1 millivolt. Note that the string moves over ten of these small squares when the operator throws one millivolt into the circuit (see Fig. 165). In other words, each electrocardiogram is standardized so that ten small blocks in the vertical direction (or 1 cm.) equal a potential difference of one millivolt. Consequently in all electrocardiograms, no matter where they are taken, the voltage of the waves can be determined accurately. The voltage or amplitude of all waves is measured from the top of the base line to the top of the deflection. If we are dealing with a downward deflection, we measure from the bottom of the base line to the lowest point of the deflection. The duration of the waves and intervals can be accurately measured on the horizontal base line.

## TECHNICAL FAULTS

For detailed technical data concerning the recording, developing, and filing of the electrocardiograms, the reader is referred to one of the special

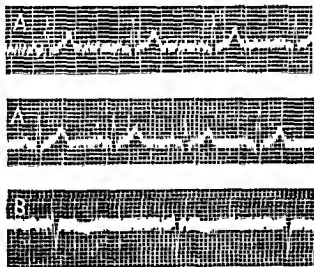


FIG. 176. Artefacts in the electrocardiogram caused by. A. Nervous patient (not relaxed). Middle strip (A) and last strip (B) show improper elimination of electrical interference in vicinity of patient.

treatises on the subject. However, the physician should become acquainted with a few details of the technic that have a direct bearing on the form of the record he receives. A laboratory report of any kind, to be of clinical

value, must be the work of a careful and skilled technician. The electrocardiogram is no exception to this rule.

The room in which the tracings are taken should be quiet and apart from the main thoroughfare of hospital or office. It should be kept comfortably warm in the winter and should have no telephone connections.

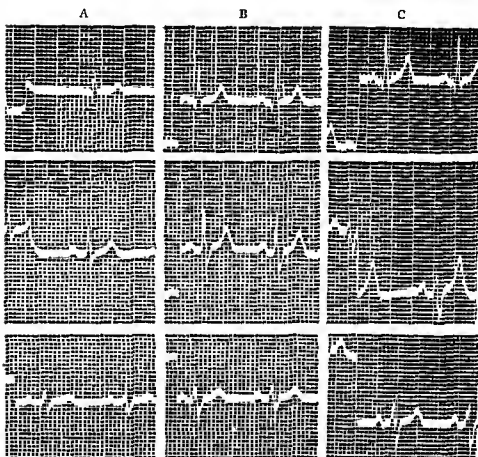


FIG. 177. Electrocardiograms of the same patient showing variations produced by differences in string tension. One millivolt is introduced in each instance. A. String too tight. The deflection is only 0.5 cm. B. String tension correct. One mv. deflects the string one cm. C. String too loose. The millivolt deflects the string 1.5 cm.

The patient should be allowed to lie down and relax for a short time before the tracing is taken, and the bed or table should be comfortable. Conversations with the technician while the record is being taken should be avoided. These points are all essential for the production of good electrocardiograms.

The mental reactions of the patient may often cause variations in the skin current with the production of artefacts in the base line. Movements of the patient during the examination or even the tension of the muscles resulting from an uncomfortable position naturally affect the electro-

cardiogram (Fig. 176). Electric appliances in the vicinity may cause fuzziness of the string shadow, although interference of this type can be eliminated satisfactorily in the modern instruments. Quite marked artefacts in the record may occur if the skin resistance is too high because of haste on the part of the technician in preparing the patient for the examination. This may result in "over-shooting" of the deflection when one millivolt is introduced. If the electrocardiogram is taken before this is corrected, the waves will be too large and after each quick deflection, the string will overshoot the zero level. If the standardization is not exact, the voltage of the waves will be incorrect (Fig. 177). When electrocardiograms are taken with the patient in recumbency, all subsequent records used for comparative study should be taken in a similar position since change in position produces alterations in the form of the electrocardiogram (Fig. 178).

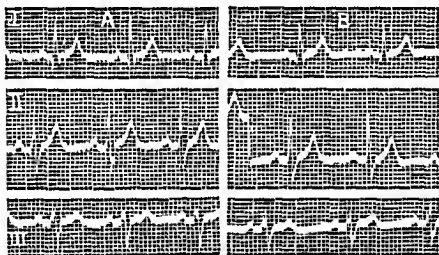


FIG. 178. Electrocardiograms taken on the same person showing the effect of change in position. A, patient sitting upright in a chair, B, patient recumbent

### THE P-WAVE

The P-wave is the first wave of a group of deflections that makes up the electrocardiogram. It precedes the QRS group and represents auricular activity. Normally the P-wave is a round, upright deflection measuring not more than 0.1 second and averaging 1 to 2 mm. in height. In lead 3 of the electrocardiogram the P-wave may be upright, isoelectric (buried in and not projecting above the base line) or inverted (projecting below the base line) (Fig. 179). If the rate of the heart is rapid, the P-wave may fall upon the downstroke of the preceding T-wave. In severe tachycardia the P-wave may be lost within the T-wave making the reading of the tracing difficult. The P-wave reappears, however, with the onset of a slower cardiac rate.

### THE P-R (P-Q) INTERVAL

One of the most important measurements in electrocardiography is the time interval (measured on the base line) from the beginning of the P-wave to the initial deflection of the QRS complex. This is known as the P-R interval and indicates the time consumed in the passage of the impulse from the S-A node to the ventricular muscle. It averages 0.15 second in the normal adult and should not exceed 0.20 second. It varies with body size and cardiac rate. With increase in the cardiac rate, there is a slight decrease in the P-R interval.

### THE QRS OR VENTRICULAR COMPLEXES

The Q-, R-, and S-waves of the electrocardiogram represent ventricular activity. The first deflection is downward and is known as the Q-wave. It is often absent in normal individuals. The next deflection is upward and is known as the R-wave. The descending limb may dip below the base line forming an S-wave. The exact form of these waves in each lead is determined by the direction that the excitation wave pursues through the ventricular muscle. In some cases where several waves of low voltage compose the QRS group, it is referred to as a W-shaped or an M-shaped QRS complex. A difference in the direction of the waves of the QRS group may be caused by a change in the heart's position, pregnancy, an abdominal tumor, high diaphragm or ascites. The height of the QRS is generally between 5 and 20 mm. (0.5 to 2.0 mv.). If over 20 mm., the QRS group is spoken of as showing "high voltage"; if below 5 mm., it is said to have "low voltage." The duration of the QRS group should not exceed 0.1 second. However, in the presence of cardiac hypertrophy, a longer time will be necessary for the impulse to pass through the thickened heart wall; consequently the QRS interval is apt to be prolonged slightly. The QRS may normally show notching or low voltage or both in lead 3.

### THE T-WAVE

The T-wave represents the retreat of negativity from the ventricular muscle. Normally it is upright and measures between 0.15 and 0.5 millivolt, and should not exceed 0.25 second in duration. Significant and important changes in the T-wave will be described later in relation to a number of cardiac conditions. The T-wave in lead 3 may be normally flat or inverted, and occasionally, under some circumstances, the T-waves in leads 2 and 3 may show a similar alteration in normal individuals. Such changes in T<sub>1</sub> are usually indicative of cardiac damage. The T-wave amplitude may be high in children, following exercise, in thyrotoxicosis, or for no apparent reason. In older patients the T-wave amplitude tends to decrease.

### THE Q-T INTERVAL

The Q-T interval is measured from the beginning of the QRS complex to the end of the T-wave and represents ventricular systole. It varies with the cardiac rate, showing increase with slow cardiac rates and decrease with a rapid rate. While there is still much to be learned about the importance of this measurement, it should always be studied carefully, especially in patients who have evidence of myocardial infections or chemical imbalance.

### THE RS-T INTERVAL

The RS-T interval is the measured distance between the last QRS deflection and the upstroke of the T-wave. It is important to note whether this segment is raised above or depressed below the base line. Distances exceeding 0.1 millivolt in either direction are abnormal. The average duration of the RS-T interval is from 0.24 to 0.28 second.

### ALTERATIONS IN THE WAVES OF THE ELECTROCARDIOGRAM AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

#### P-WAVE CHANGES

When the P-wave is notched, inverted, or higher than 2.5 mm., it may be said to be abnormal. In mitral and pulmonary stenosis, structural alterations are observed in the auricular musculature, and these may be reflected in the P-wave of the electrocardiogram. Notching and increase in the duration of the P-wave beyond 0.1 second are common changes in mitral disease. Care must be used, however, in interpreting slight alterations. If the notching of the P-wave is slight and occurs in leads 2 and 3, the finding should not be stressed. If the notching is marked and occurs in lead I, it is significant. A normal, upright P-wave appears in the electrocardiogram when the impulse originates in the sinus node. Should the impulse for cardiac contraction arise in any area outside the sinus node or pacemaker, we may expect to find an inversion or alteration in size and shape of the P-wave. The P-waves of auricular premature contractions, for this reason, are often quite different from the P-waves of the rest of the tracing. The alteration in form of the P-wave is usually proportional to the distance of the ectopic focus from the pacemaker (Fig. 179 G). When a part of the P-wave appears above the base line and a part below this level, it is said to be *diphasic* (Fig. 179 E). Diphasic or inverted P-waves also occur in paroxysmal tachycardias of auricular origin. Here the abnormal focus of impulse formation, instead of initiating a single contraction, for a time becomes the pacemaker and sends out impulses at a rate usually exceeding 160 per minute. Other parts of the conduction system may become more excitable and initiate impulses for cardiac contraction. In such a case the impulse may spread backward (retrogression) and produce auricular contraction. This may occur before,



during or after the ventricular contraction, depending on the site of formation of the new impulse. If auricular contraction follows that of the ventricle, the P-wave will appear following the QRS instead of in the usual location, and it will usually show inversion. As we will see later, there are no P-waves when auricular fibrillation is present. Occasionally the sinus node may fail to generate an impulse or the auricles *do not respond to the sinus impulse for the space of one or more cardiac cycles*; this is known as sinus arrest. The P-wave and consequently all the other waves of the cycle are absent (Fig. 160 A and B).

#### ABNORMAL P-R INTERVAL

Prolongation of the P-R interval over 0.20 second is distinctly abnormal and points to auriculo-ventricular block (Fig. 181). It may accompany

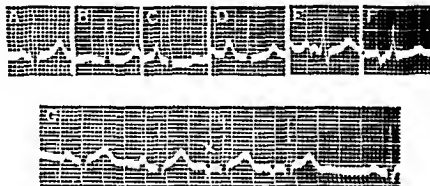


FIG 179. Abnormalities of the P-Wave. A: normal; B: flat; C: pointed; D: widened; E: notched and widened; F: inverted; G: a change is seen from upright to inverted caused by shift in site of impulse formation.

diphtheritic carditis and is one of the most valuable signs in the presence of acute myocarditis. Over 25 per cent of patients show prolongation of the P-R interval during active stages of a rheumatic infection. In many of these cases an overactivity of the vagus may be a contributing factor. Increase in the P-R interval may be caused by defective conduction following interference with the blood supply to the bundle of His. Consequently arteriosclerotic (rarely syphilitic) heart disease may produce this alteration.

#### CHANGES IN THE QRS COMPLEX

It is important to remember that an impulse for cardiac contraction arising anywhere above the bundle will result in the normal spread of the excitation wave and produce a QRS complex of normal configuration. Occasionally the distribution will be abnormal and a slight difference in the QRS complex results; these beats are called aberrant.

When we examine the QRS complex, the following points must be noted:

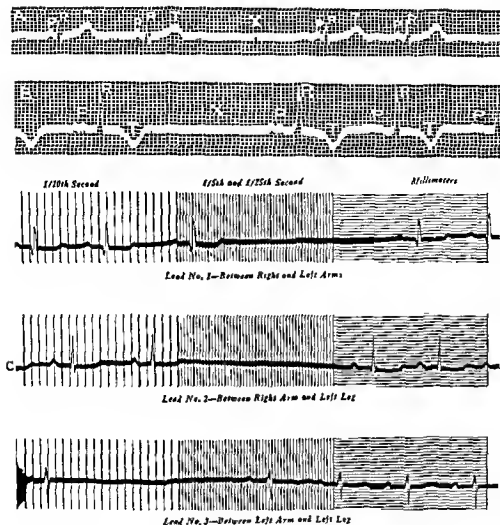


FIG. 180. Sinus arrest. In A and B note omission of one complete cardiac cycle. In C there are two complete cycles omitted from each lead. (See Case No. 66.)

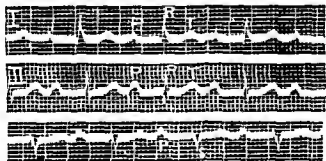


FIG. 181. Prolongation of the P-R Intervals or first stage heart block. In lead 2 the P-R Intervals measure 0.32 second. (See Case No. 36.)

the direction of the major deflection (particularly in leads 1 and 3), the duration, the configuration and the height. Notching in lead 3 alone cannot be considered as an abnormal finding. However, notching in leads 1 and 2 (particularly the M- and W-shaped complexes) must be considered as evidence of myocardial disease. A slight notching seen near the base line is not as important as that observed at the top of the R-wave (Fig. 182). All low voltage QRS groups occasionally show notching in the absence of myocardial damage. Marked notching of the QRS is seen in premature beats and in bundle-branch block. These departures from the

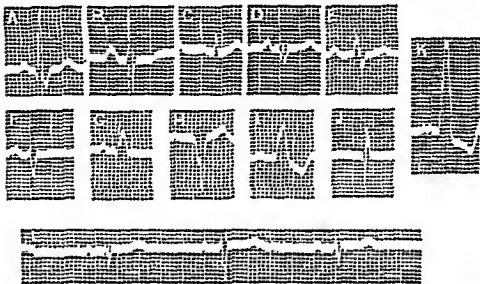


FIG 182. Variations in configuration of the QRS group. A: normal; B: diphasic, C low voltage; D notched ("u"-shaped complex); E: diphasic and slurred; F: shaded with deep S-wave; G: slightly widened, notched and low voltage; H: slurred with deep S-wave; I: widened and notched (bundle-branch block); J: deep Q-wave in lead 3; K: high voltage; L: respiratory variations in QRS amplitude in lead 3.

normal will be considered in detail later. Low voltage of the QRS sometimes occurs in patients with extensive edema, hypothyroidism, constrictive pericarditis, and myocardial weakness. The latter is the explanation of the low-voltage electrocardiogram that often follows occlusion of the coronary arteries. Low voltage QRS may be present occasionally in the absence of heart disease. Consequently a low-voltage electrocardiogram can be interpreted correctly only in the light of the clinical findings.

The duration of the QRS group should not be more than 0.1 second; when it exceeds this, myocardial disease should be suspected unless one of the usual types of bundle-branch block is present. Normally the QRS is tallest in lead 2; consequently increased amplitude in this lead as a single finding has no significance. The direction of the QRS groups in leads 1 and 3 is important in determining the axis deviation (page 597).

## CHANGES IN THE RS-T INTERVAL

Changes in this area between the end of the QRS and the beginning of the T-wave have considerable clinical significance. Elevation or depression of this segment in relation to the base line should always be carefully noted. *Digitalis* may cause a marked alteration in this area. Characteristic deformities also occur in the presence of coronary occlusion. Both will be considered in detail later.

## CHANGES IN THE Q-T INTERVAL

The distance between the first part of the QRS and the end of the T-wave can be said to correspond approximately to ventricular systole

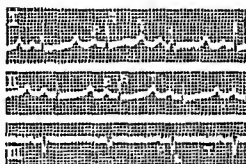


FIG. 183. Prolongation of the Q-T Intervals in hypocalcemia.

and is lengthened in hypocalcemia (Fig. 183) and after emergence from diabetic coma.

## CHANGES IN THE Q-WAVE

Recently a deep Q-wave in lead 3, particularly when accompanied by a Q-wave in lead 2 and an inversion of  $T_3$ , has been shown to be a



FIG. 184. Deep Q-wave in lead 3. In this instance it accompanied pregnancy and disappeared after delivery.

significant electrocardiographic finding. It often follows a posterior coronary occlusion. On the other hand, a deep  $Q_3$  may accompany pregnancy (because of the high diaphragm) and disappear following delivery

(Fig. 184). Here again correct interpretation of the electrocardiogram depends on a knowledge of the clinical findings. If the history and physical examination are negative, too much significance should not be attached to the isolated finding of a deep Q-wave in lead 3. However, it always warrants a further study of the patient (see Figs. 237, 243, 247).

#### T-WAVE CHANGES

Inversion of the T-wave, particularly in lead 1, is significant. The shape of the T-wave and type of deformity in each instance are the important

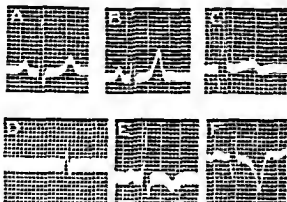


FIG. 185. Variations in the T-wave. A: normal; B: large amplitude, C: biphasic; D flat; E: inverted, F: deeply inverted (coronary type with deep Q<sub>3</sub>).

factor. For example, it will be readily seen that the type of the T-wave inversion differs in Fig. 185 E and F from that observed in Fig. 230. In the change of the T-wave from its normal upright position to inversion, a stage in the development is flattening. Consequently flattening of the T-wave is an important observation, particularly when it occurs in lead 1. However, in some hearts, particularly of the long ptotic or drop type, too much significance should not be attached to this change. If the T-wave in lead 1 is low with upright and normal T<sub>2</sub> and T<sub>3</sub> in a person of this build, it should be considered normal. This again demonstrates that the decision regarding the exact meaning of an electrocardiographic alteration can be made only when the result of a complete examination of the patient is known. This is particularly true in cases on inversion of the T-wave in lead 3. It has been said that a slight degree of inversion of T<sub>3</sub> is normal. Deep inversion, however, should arouse suspicion, since this abnormality may follow a posterior coronary occlusion (Fig. 185 F). This electrocardiographic finding, particularly if accompanied by a deep Q<sub>3</sub> and inverted T<sub>2</sub>, should direct attention to the past history of these patients and inquiry should be made concerning the presence of chest pain, slight or severe in degree, at some previous time.

## THE ELECTRICAL AXIS AND ITS DEVIATION

Change in the electrical axis of the electrocardiogram is important. The axis may deviate to the right or to the left. Although a complete study of axis deviation may prove complex even to the initiated, the main principles should be readily grasped. Let us suppose that the solid arrow A-B in Fig. 186 A represents the value and direction of the various action currents generated in the heart as it contracts. If lines are drawn perpendicular to the three sides of an equilateral triangle, CED (representing the three leads of the electrocardiogram), the values of  $a_1b_1$ ,  $a_2b_2$ , and  $a_3b_3$ , will represent the values of the QRS in each lead (Fig. 186 B). It

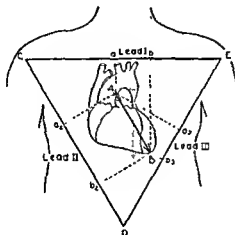


FIG. 186. A. Einthoven's triangle. See text for explanation.

will be readily seen that if the heart changes position in the chest and rotates to the right and assumes the position of the dotted arrow in the diagram, the value of  $a_1b_1$  will decrease. When the arrow representing the action curve is exactly perpendicular to the base of the triangle, the QRS voltage will be zero. Should the rotation of the heart take place still further to the right, the tip of the arrow will move toward the side CD and the current, represented by the projections of the new position of the heart, will flow in the opposite direction—and the QRS in lead I will now be inverted instead of upright. Right axis deviation is then said to be present (Fig. 187 A). A similar rotation of the heart to the left will bring the arrow A-B perpendicular to the side DE. In this position the value of the QRS in lead 3 will be zero. Should the displacement be more marked and the point of the arrow move farther to the left, the direction of the current as plotted on the side DE will be reversed. Left axis deviation will then be present (Fig. 187 B).

**Rule.** Left axis deviation is present when the major deflection is upward in lead I and downward in lead 3. Right axis devia-

tion is present when the major deflection of the QRS is downward in lead I and upward in lead 3. When the QRS complexes

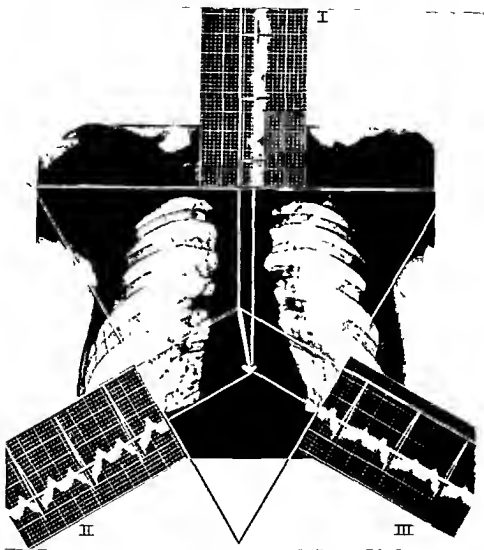


FIG. 186. B. Illustrates diagrammatically the effect of a transverse position of the heart on the size and direction of the main deflections of the electrocardiogram. An Einthoven (equilateral) triangle is drawn about the heart. The arrow represents both the electrical and anatomical axes of the heart. The size and direction of the R-wave in each lead is obtained by vertical projection of the ends of the arrow on that lead. (From Master, A. M. *The Electrocardiogram and X-Ray Configuration of the Heart*, Courtesy Lea and Febiger Co., Phila.)

are upright in leads 1 and 3, no axis deviation is present. With no axis deviation  $QRS_2$  is higher than either  $QRS_1$  or  $QRS_3$ . With either right or left axis deviation, it is lower.

Axis deviation is generally interpreted as meaning preponderance of the right or left side of the heart. Consequently in clinical conditions affecting the left side of the heart, such as hypertension, aortic regurgitation

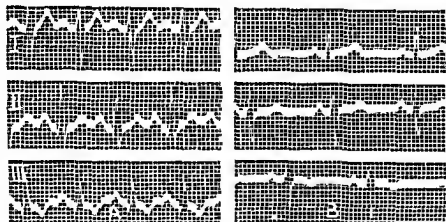


FIG. 187. A. Right axis deviation, B. Left axis deviation.

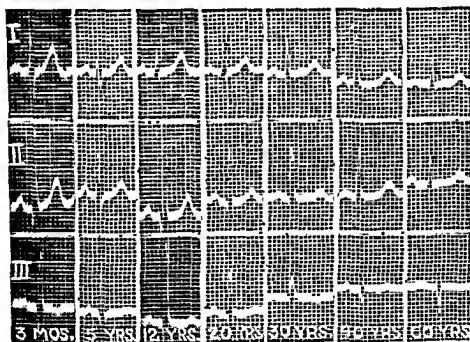


FIG. 188. Normal electrocardiograms showing variations at different age periods.

or aortic stenosis, left axis deviation is commonly encountered. Similarly, in mitral stenosis with enlargement of the right ventricle, some degree of right axis deviation may be expected in the electrocardiogram. It can also be seen that IF EXTREME HYPERTROPHY OF THE HEART IS PRESENT AF-



FFECTING THE TWO SIDES EQUALLY WITH THE INITIAL RATIO UNDISTURBED, THE ELECTRICAL FORCES WILL BALANCE AND NO AXIS DEVIATION WILL RESULT.

Outside influences changing the position of the heart in the thorax may produce axis deviation. A high diaphragm resulting from pregnancy or abdominal tumor or a large pleural effusion in the right chest may rotate the heart to the left and produce a left axis deviation. Occasionally as the relationship between the mass of the left ventricle and the right ventricle changes in normal hearts, an axis deviation may result. For example, at birth and for the first few weeks of life, the mass of the right ventricle ex-

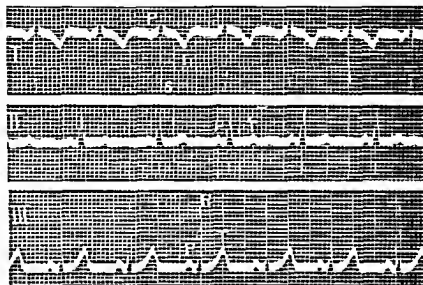


FIG. 189. The electrocardiogram in dextrocardia. Note inversion of all waves in lead 1.

ceeds that of the left, and right axis deviation is seen (Fig. 188). In the older age groups, the relationship is in favor of the left ventricle, consequently left axis deviation may appear as a normal finding.

If we view the heart under the fluoroscope, we will note that in some cases there is a marked change in its position following deep inspiration. This amount of alteration in cardiac position can cause a shift in the electrical axis of sufficient degree to be recorded in the electrocardiogram (see Fig 182 L). If the respiratory excursion is slight or if the heart rests lightly on the diaphragm as it does in ptotic individuals, the change in cardiac position will be scarcely noticeable and there will be no alteration in the tracing.

Congenital dextrocardia presents a characteristic electrocardiographic picture (Fig. 189). All the waves in lead 1 are inverted. This is what we would expect since the heart in these patients is opposite in its relationship to the leads. A similar electrocardiographic picture results if the lead cords to the patient's arms are reversed by a careless technician.

## READING THE ELECTROCARDIOGRAM

Before a detailed interpretation of the electrocardiogram is attempted, a résumé of all the clinical data available at the time of the examination should be in the hands of the physician giving the report. If this rule is followed in every case, many errors in the clinical application of electrocardiography will be avoided. A suitable form covering all essential details is shown in Table XXIV. Before the tracing is mounted for study, make certain that the standardization is correct, i.e., a string deflection of 1 cm. follows the introduction of one millivolt potential difference (see Fig. 165 C and D). Suitable seven-inch strips should then be selected from each lead for mounting, either in the elaborate (and more expensive) forms issued by the instrument companies or on a sheet of ordinary paper the size of the ward chart.

TABLE XXIV  
HOSPITAL OF  
THE WOMAN'S MEDICAL COLLEGE OF PENNSYLVANIA  
DEPARTMENT OF CARDIOLOGY

|              |                     |                              |
|--------------|---------------------|------------------------------|
| REQUEST FOR: | 1—ELECTROCARDIOGRAM | Check examination<br>desired |
|              | 2—ORTHODIAGRAM      |                              |
|              | 3—CLINICAL OPINION  |                              |

(Note: Requests for electrocardiograms should be made in all cases where the clinical condition warrants and should be signed for by the chief of the service).

|                 |                                          |
|-----------------|------------------------------------------|
| NAME:           | Ward, Out-Patient, Semi-Private, Private |
| Age:            | (Please check status)                    |
| Date:           | Service of:                              |
| Blood Pressure: | Height:                      Weight:     |

RESUMÉ OF THE CLINICAL FINDINGS: (Include your impression of the etiology, heart size, and rhythm).

## CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS:

HAS PATIENT RECENTLY RECEIVED DIGITALIS, MORPHINE OR QUINIDINE? If so, How LONG AND IN WHAT QUANTITIES?

ADDITIONAL LABORATORY DATA: (Include here urinalysis, blood count, blood chemistry, and serology).

M.D.

NOTE: It is most important that above form be completely filled out in order that proper interpretation of laboratory data can be made. With frequent requests (serial studies) only details of progress and additional laboratory studies need be furnished.

In order that all the features of the electrocardiogram may be included in the description, it is well for the beginner to adopt a definite method of procedure and follow it in all subsequent studies. Important items are then not likely to be overlooked. First note the rate of the heart. This may be determined by placing a six-inch ruler (usually equivalent to 30 of the fifth of a second divisions) beneath the strip of film, and counting the number of auricular and ventricular cycles included in this measurement. In Fig. 190 the rate is 80, normal sinus rhythm is present and each auricular

wave (P) is followed by a ventricular complex (QRS). The rhythm is carefully studied by noting the presence of P-waves, their position in the cycle and the distance between them. With a pair of architect's dividers, span the distance between the peaks of the QRS complexes. In Fig. 190 it will be seen that they are equidistant. The rhythm, therefore, is regular, and the P-waves show that it is of sinus-node origin. Next note the size, shape and duration of the P-wave in each lead. In Fig. 190, P<sub>1</sub> is widened, measuring 0.12 second. In lead 2 the P-waves are peaked, while in lead 3 they appear to be diphasic. The P-R intervals (measuring from the

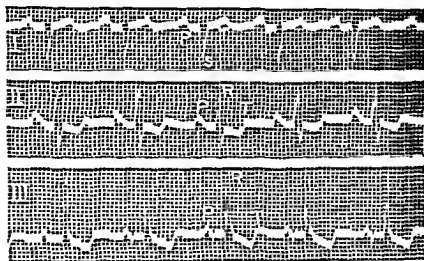


FIG. 190. Electrocardiogram of a woman of 34, admitted to the hospital because of increasing dyspnea, edema and hemoptysis. She gave a history of two attacks of rheumatic fever in childhood. Examination showed cardiac enlargement, presystolic and diastolic apical murmurs and an accentuated pulmonic second sound. Tablets of the whole leaf of digitalis 0.1 Gm. (gr. 1½) had been given after meals for three days prior to admission. See text for reading.

beginning of the P-wave to the first deflection of the QRS) are 0.20 second in duration in lead 2. There is present a deep S-wave in lead 1. The QRS in lead 2 has an R-wave and a small S-wave and is diphasic. The T-wave in lead 1 is upright and normal. In lead 2 there is a depression of the S-T interval. The same is present to a more marked extent in lead 3. Right axis deviation is seen (inverted QRS in lead 1 and upright in lead 3).

**Summary.** Prominent and widened P or auricular waves, right axis deviation and depression of the S-T intervals in leads 2 and 3.

**Clinical Conclusions.** The P-wave changes and the right axis deviation support the diagnosis of mitral stenosis and suggest the presence of hypertrophy and disease of the auricular muscle and right-sided cardiac enlargement. The depressed S-T intervals in leads 2 and 3 show beginning digitalis action.

## SINUS MECHANISMS

If impulses arise from the sinus node at a rate of 60 to 100 per minute, the P-waves will have a normal shape, and the cycles in the electrocardiogram will be equally spaced. This is spoken of as normal sinus rhythm.

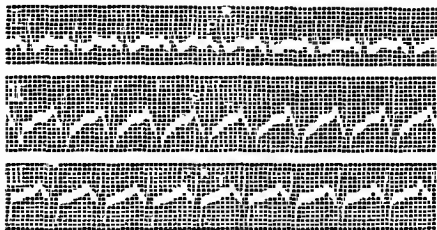


FIG. 191. Electrocardiogram of a woman of 40 who showed all the clinical signs of thyrotoxicosis. The basal metabolic rate was plus 55 per cent. Rate 150. Sinus tachycardia.

If the sinus node initiates impulses at a rate exceeding 100 per minute, sinus tachycardia is present. These impulses all follow the normal pathway. A glance at the tracing (Fig. 191, lead 1) shows that all the waves of the electrocardiogram (P, QRS, and T) have a normal relationship. The in-

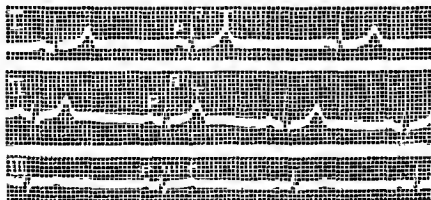


FIG. 192. Sinus bradycardia (Rate 58) Note that the intervals between the T-wave and the following P-wave are prolonged.

terval between the end of the T-wave and the next P-wave is shortened. In lead 2 this T-P interval is so decreased that the P-wave arises from the downstroke of the preceding T-wave.

When the rate of impulse production is less than 60 per minute, sinus bradycardia is present. In Fig. 192 the cardiac rate is 58. All the waves of the electrocardiogram appear to be normal, but the distance between the end of the T-wave and the next P-wave (ventricular diastole) is prolonged. Note the low voltage and notching of QRS in lead 3. This is NOT AN ABNORMAL FINDING WHEN IT OCCURS IN LEAD 3 ALONE. No abnormalities could be detected in the cardiovascular system of this patient. The tracing was taken during convalescence from influenza.

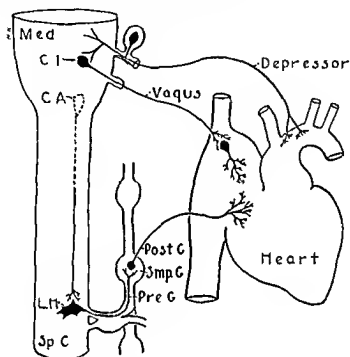


FIG 193 Diagram illustrating innervation of the heart.

Although the initiation and transmission of the cardiac impulses do not depend upon the nervous system, the activity of the heart is controlled by extrinsic nerves. The vagus and sympathetic (Fig. 193) are regulators of cardiac action, increasing and decreasing cardiac rate according to the bodily needs of the moment. The vagus sends fibers to the auricle and slows the heart through its influence on the sinus node and auricular muscle. In youthful subjects who have normal hearts, there may be noted a slowing down and a speeding up of cardiac rate during inspiration and expiration. Inspiration speeds the rate while expiration slows the rate. This irregularity is known as juvenile arrhythmia, sinus arrhythmia or vagal arrhythmia, and is caused by alterations in the vagal tone. In some instances where the respiratory relationship is absent, the arrhythmia may be caused by digitalis. Figure 194 shows a marked sinus

arrhythmia. Note that the individual waves of the electrocardiogram bear the same relationship to one another in all leads. However, the space between the T-waves and the next P-waves (T-P interval) varies with each beat. The remaining features of this record are normal.

Very rarely the sinus node may fail to generate an impulse for contraction (see Fig. 180 A). The result is a "dead string," and one beat of the heart is entirely blotted out. The pause here is usually equal to two cardiac cycles. Administration of atropine blocks the terminal branches of the vagus and tends to abolish the arrhythmia. Figure 180 A is the tracing of a healthy young athlete who came to the hospital for study because the school physician detected "dropped beats" on auscultation. Sinus arrest

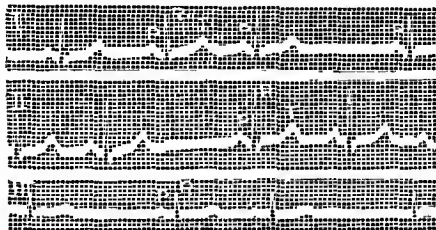


FIG. 194. Sinus arrhythmia. A slowing occurs during expiration and a quickening during inspiration.

or standstill of the entire heart for one or two beats is caused by either failure of the sinus node to initiate the contraction impulse or the block of this impulse before it reaches the auricular muscle. Its presence may be suspected clinically when a dropped beat is noted by auscultation. However, its true character can be recognized only when an electrocardiographic examination is made. Vagal arrhythmias of this type are not unusual in well trained athletes.

In Fig. 180 B the same condition is seen. Here, however, it accompanies a deeply inverted T-wave in lead I. This patient had cardiac enlargement of the hypertensive type and a history of two episodes of prolonged chest pain following coronary occlusions. In this case the sinus arrest was undoubtedly caused by a deficiency of the blood supply to the myocardial area containing the pacemaker.

Very rarely two beats may be omitted. The tracing shown in Fig. 180 C was taken the day after an attack of chest pain lasting an hour in a man of 50 who had a previous history of hypertension. The patient was sent to the hospital as a case of posterior coronary occlusion inasmuch as the

sudden fall in the pulse rate closely following the attacks suggested complete heart block. Since the blood supply to the bundle arises from the posterior coronary artery, an involvement at this site was suspected. However, only a very slight increase in the P-R intervals was noted. The sinus arrest disappeared in a few days, and the patient made an uneventful recovery.

In Fig. 195 an interesting variation will be noted. After the third auricular beat, a block of the impulse for contraction occurs at the sinus node. In this instance the long pause is not interrupted by the occurrence of a P-wave. A slightly abnormal ventricular complex first appears. This shows an important cardiac protective mechanism. When the impulse for contraction failed to arrive at the A-V nodal tissues in a time far exceeding the usual diastolic pause, the A-V nodal structures in the emergency assumed the role of pacemaker and generated the impulse for contraction. This phenomenon is known as "VENTRICULAR ESCAPE." Note the slightly different form of the ventricular complex in this cycle and the absence before it of the P-wave of auricular contraction. Both auricles and

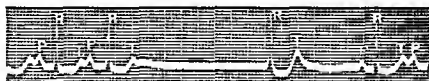


FIG. 195. Ventricular escape. See text for explanation.

ventricles in this instance contracted together. Consequently the P-wave is buried in the QRS. The next impulse for contraction comes from the usual site in the sinus node as is shown by the reappearance of the normal P-wave. While ventricular escape is of no clinical importance, it demonstrates the fine adjustment of the cardiac mechanism in the event of failure of the usual impulse for contraction. It is likewise another example of the value of the electrocardiograph in explaining the cause of an abnormality of cardiac rhythm.

Vagal action may also cause a shift in the pacemaker or site of impulse formation in the sinus node, or it may cause the pacemaker to move down to the A-V node for the space of a few beats. A close study of Fig. 196 reveals, in addition to the bradycardia, a variation in the duration of the P-R intervals. At times the P-wave is buried in the QRS (first beat of lead 1) or it may be seen budding from the upright limb of the QRS (second beat in lead 2). Here the pacemaker is shifting or wandering back and forth between its usual site and the A-V node. THERE IS LITTLE OR NO CHANGE IN THE FORM OF THE QRS GROUPS WHEN THE IMPULSE FOR CONTRACTION ARISES ABOVE THE A-V NODE. Wandering pacemaker is again one of the finer points in electrocardiographic diagnosis and usually has no clinical significance.

When the site of origin of the impulse shifts to the nodal tissues and

remains there, A-V nodal rhythm is said to be present. Figure 197 shows this mechanism. Note the absence of P-waves, the regular rhythm and the slow ventricular rate.<sup>43</sup> The P-waves are buried in the QRS groups. This

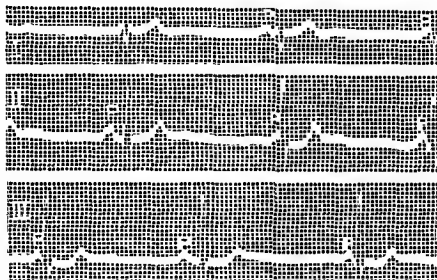


FIG. 196 Wandering pacemaker. Note the variations in the P-R intervals in all leads as the site of impulse formation shifts from the sinus node to sections of the A-V node.

rhythm was recorded during the course of digitalization of a patient of 75 years of age who was suffering from arteriosclerotic heart disease and congestive failure. In this instance it was a very important electrocardio-

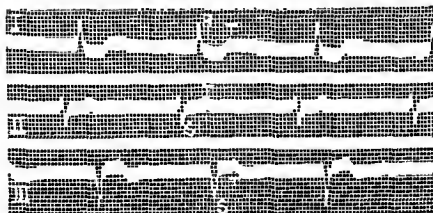


FIG. 197. A-V Nodal Rhythm. Impulses arise from the A-V node, consequently auricle and ventricle contract together and the P-wave is buried in the QRS. Rate 45.

graphic finding. The Heart Station called the ward to stop the digitalis, since nodal rhythm often appears as a sign of beginning toxic action of this drug (page 8).



## PREMATURE CONTRACTIONS (Extrasystoles)

The ability to generate impulses for contraction is not a property possessed by the conduction system alone. Any part of the heart structure may independently initiate these impulses, and the electrocardiogram will show the presence of an isolated beat unrelated to the existing rhythm. Since these beats arise from an abnormal focus, they are spoken of as ectopic. They arise before the next beat is due and consequently are also referred to as premature. (The older textbooks called them "extrasystoles"). These premature beats generally possess characteristic features that permit us

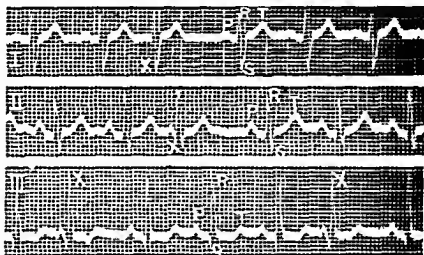


FIG. 198. Premature auricular contractions. In leads 2 and 3 the regular rhythm is interrupted at the sites marked "x" by premature beats from an abnormal auricular focus. The P-waves are smaller and the P-R Intervals are shorter. The site of origin of the beats is therefore low down in the auricle near the A-V node.

to place the abnormal focus for impulse formation in the auricle, the A-V node, the bundle of His or the ventricles.

If the premature contraction interrupts regular cardiac rhythm, it is usually followed by a long pause known as the compensatory pause. The first impulse arising from the sinus node following the premature beat is unable to initiate a contraction because of the refractory state of the heart muscle. Consequently the whole heart pauses until the next impulse arrives from the S-A node. The unusually vigorous contraction that occurs after the premature beat is often felt and interpreted by the patient as "skipping," "a turn-over," or a "pounding" of the heart.

Occasionally a premature beat may occur between two normal beats and not interrupt the dominant rhythm. These are rare and are known as interpolated beats (see Fig. 201 A). They are the only true extrasystoles

In the electrocardiogram the shapes of the premature beats arising in the same lead from identical foci are similar. In the same lead differences in shape of two premature contractions from the ventricle point to two different foci.

### PREMATURE AURICULAR CONTRACTIONS

Auricular premature contractions occur before the normal beat is due and are characterized by alteration in the P-waves. If the impulse arises in an auricular area outside the S-A node, the P-wave shows a difference

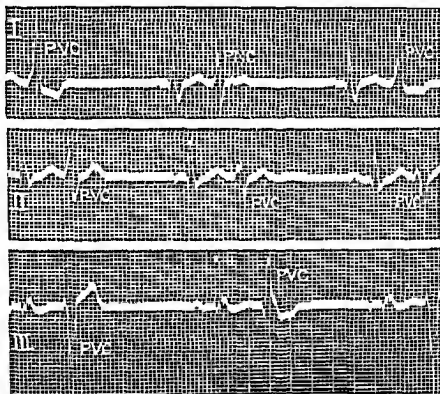


FIG. 199. Nodal and ventricular premature contractions. The premature beats are marked.

in its shape. In lead 2 of Fig. 198 the third beat has a P-wave of different shape, since its point of origin is low down in the auricular musculature near the A-V node. Inasmuch as the distance to the nodal tissue is now shorter, the P-R interval is decreased. In G of Fig. 179 two premature beats of auricular origin are seen to occur together. Their abnormal site of origin is indicated by the inversion of the P-wave in each instance. The QRS complexes of the auricular premature beats are similar to the others in the lead, since the impulse descends to the ventricles along the normal conduction pathways. Occasionally, however, the

ventricular beat may be slightly different in contour when the period of rest has been insufficient. In some instances auricular premature beats may bring to light an early conduction defect. For example, the P-R interval following a premature beat may be unduly prolonged and exceed the P-R interval of the normal beats; in this case we assume that some pathologic process is responsible for the tissue changes contributing to this delayed conduction.

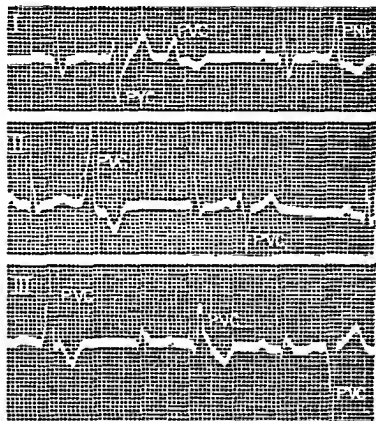


FIG. 200. Premature ventricular contractions from foci in both ventricles.

If the focus for the premature beat is in the A-V node, the auricles and ventricles often contract together because of the spread of the impulse in both directions (Fig. 199, lead 1, beat 3). In this event the P-wave may be buried in the QRS, although in some instances it may follow the ventricular complex. Occasionally the impulse reaches the auricle first, and the auricular contraction precedes the ventricular. In this instance, however, the P-R interval will be much shorter than that observed in normal beats. If the site of origin of the premature beat is very low in the A-V nodal tissue, the configuration of the QRS groups that follow may be slightly aberrant (Fig. 199, lead 2, beat 2. See also Fig. 195, beat 3).

Where auricular contraction follows an impulse traveling in a reverse direction along the specialized tissues, we speak of this phenomenon as "retrograde conduction."

### PREMATURE VENTRICULAR CONTRACTIONS

Premature ventricular contractions occur most frequently and are the usual cause of "skipped beats." They are readily recognized in the electrocardiogram (Figs. 199, 200, 201). An impulse arising in the muscle of either ventricle causes premature contraction of both ventricles, but the chambers do not contract together, since it takes longer for the impulse to traverse nonspecialized muscular tissue. For this reason the ventricu-

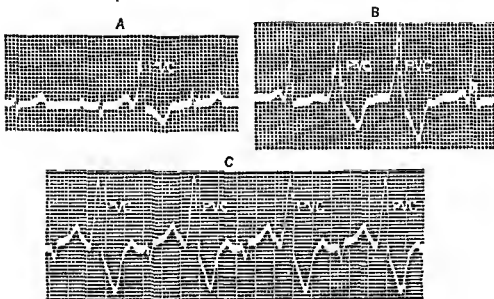


FIG. 201. Premature ventricular contractions. A single or isolated, B, in pairs. The same irritable focus sends in two impulses for contraction, C, premature beat following each normal beat.

lar complexes of the premature beats are wider than normal beats. The irregular spread of the impulse often causes notching, and the complexes are not preceded by P-waves. The rhythmic production of stimuli by the S-A node is unaffected. After the ventricles respond to the premature beat, they are in a refractory state when the next impulse arrives from the pacemaker. Consequently there is a pause until the succeeding impulse re-establishes normal rhythm.

Definite localization at the present time is not possible. Ventricular premature beats may occur as single beats (Fig. 201 A); less often they appear in pairs (Fig. 201 B). Occasionally they may follow each normal beat (Fig. 201 C), particularly when they appear as a manifestation of the toxic action of digitalis. It is usually stated that showers of premature beats from a variety of foci in auricles or ventricles or both are more apt

to occur in the presence of cardiac damage. However, I have seen many exceptions to this rule.

### THE PAROXYSMAL TACHYCARDIAS

Premature beats from any site may occur in short runs because of the fact that the ectopic focus takes complete command of the cardiac rhythm



FIG. 202. A short paroxysm of ventricular tachycardia. The onset and offset are seen. Similar paroxysms in this patient terminated in paroxysms of ventricular fibrillation. For this reason this irregularity is referred to as the prebrillatory type of ventricular tachycardia.

and sends in a succession of stimuli (Fig. 202). We may refer to this event as either a series of premature ventricular contractions or a short run of tachycardia. If the focus is in the auricle, we speak of the condition as paroxysmal auricular tachycardia (Fig. 203). Similar paroxysms may have their origin in an A-V nodal focus (A-V nodal paroxysmal tachycardia) (Fig. 204).

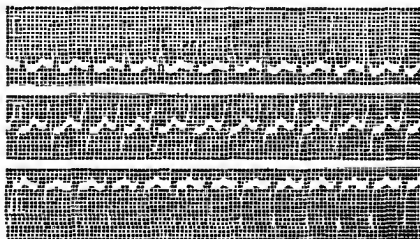


FIG. 203. Paroxysmal auricular tachycardia.

Clinically these paroxysms are characterized by the abruptness of their onset and offset and occur in patients who have no other sign of a cardiac abnormality as well as in those who present definite evidence of heart disease. In most instances it is remarkable how well the heart muscle stands the strain of these abnormal seizures. The complete absence of any of the usual signs of failure speaks well for the functional integrity of the myocardium in such cases. Of course, in older people who have degenerative changes, the

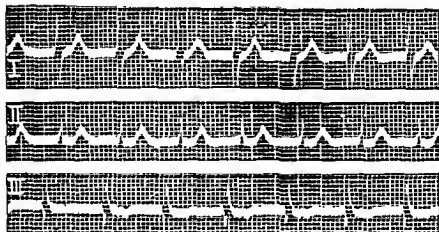


FIG. 204. Paroxysmal nodal tachycardia.

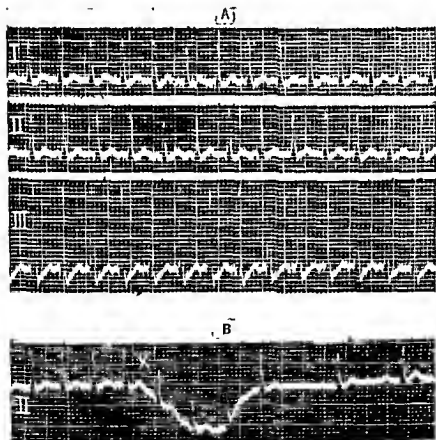


FIG. 205. A: Three leads of a tracing taken during a paroxysm of auricular tachycardia;  
 B: Paroxysm abolished by pressure over the right carotid sinus (applied at "x").

sudden onset of a paroxysm of tachycardia may be followed quickly by evidences of cardiac failure or acute pulmonary edema. The situation is then a medical emergency.

In Fig. 205 A we see three leads of a paroxysm of auricular tachycardia. In B of this figure a tracing of lead 2 was taken while pressure was made over the right carotid sinus. There is prompt return of sinus rhythm at the point marked "X." Figure 206 shows a similar paroxysm in another patient, also stopped by carotid sinus pressure.

Paroxysmal ventricular tachycardia (Fig. 207) is a much more serious irregularity and occurs in the presence of organic heart disease. The rate

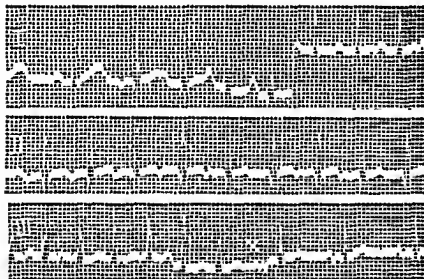


FIG. 206 Three leads of an electrocardiogram showing the onset and offset of a paroxysm of auricular tachycardia. The onset followed the second beat in lead 1. Note the inversion of the P-wave in this lead indicating abnormal auricular focus. The paroxysm was terminated at point marked "x" by carotid sinus pressure.

is usually slower than that of auricular or nodal tachycardias and varies from 130 to 170 beats per minute. The tracing has the appearance of a series of premature ventricular contractions. This is not unusual, since a paroxysm of ventricular tachycardia arises from an ectopic focus in the ventricular muscle. The QRS groups in these paroxysms are widened and usually notched.

Paroxysmal ventricular tachycardia is often irregular, while the other varieties are perfectly regular. The two main causes of paroxysmal ventricular tachycardia are myocardial infarction and the administration of excessive doses of digitalis to a patient who has a badly damaged myocardium.

The prefibrillary type of ventricular tachycardia is a dangerous as well as an imperfectly understood mechanism (see Fig. 214 A). It is dangerous

because of the frequency with which it terminates in ventricular fibrillation. Some observers believe that this arrhythmia is caused by a circus movement in the ventricle similar to the circus movement described by Lewis as occurring in the auricles. They refer to it, therefore, as ventricular flutter.

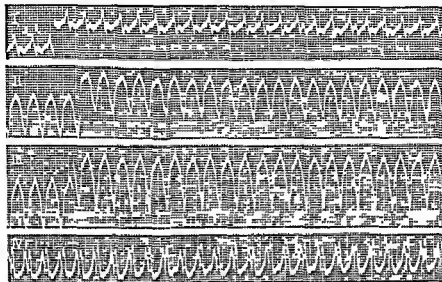


FIG. 207. Ventricular paroxysmal tachycardia. The onset followed an attack of acute coronary occlusion. It was abolished by quinidine.

In ventricular fibrillation the appearance of the tracing is characteristic (Fig. 208). The waves show a disorderly arrangement and vary in size, shape and duration from cycle to cycle. There are only about 17 instances in the literature of recovery from ventricular fibrillation that are supported by electrocardiographic evidence. Ventricular fibrillation, no doubt,



FIG. 208. Ventricular fibrillation. Note irregular, coarse type of curve that varies from beat to beat. This tracing was obtained during an Adams-Stokes seizure in a patient suffering from hypertensive cardiovascular disease complicated by complete heart block.

occurs more often than it is recorded. I have seen two cases, both of which were associated with varying degrees of A-V heart block (see Chapter 12).

### HEART BLOCK

The pathway followed by the excitation wave from the auricle to the ventricular muscle has already been described. Disease processes affecting



the bundle of His may delay the passage of this impulse, or if more extensive, may block it altogether. The function of conduction in the bundle may likewise be depressed by an overactive vagus hut rarely to the stage of complete heart block. When myocardial invasion takes place, particu-

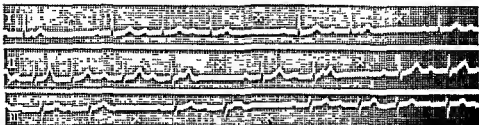


FIG. 209. Incomplete heart block. Dropped beats occur at sites marked "x." Note gradual increase in conduction time until beat is dropped (Wenckebach phenomenon).

larly of the diphtheritic type, the first hint of mischief may be indicated by a prolongation of the P-R interval beyond the normal limit of 0.20 second (see Fig. 181). If the lesion progresses, the bundle may show an increasing inability to conduct impulses. In this event the P-R intervals gradually lengthen until a stage is reached where there is a total failure of the

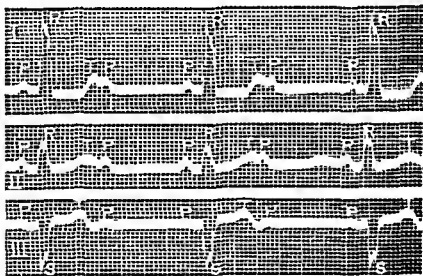


FIG. 210. Heart block. In this record every second beat is dropped.

impulse to traverse the bundle (Fig. 209). A beat will then be dropped out. With this short rest, the bundle may be able to conduct the next impulse, and a shorter P-R interval appears. The same process is then repeated until another beat is dropped. This gradual increase in the duration of the P-R interval that ends in the total failure of the bundle to conduct

an impulse is known as the Wenckebach phenomenon. The dropped beat is characterized clinically by an interruption of the pulse at the wrist and precordial silence. The latter distinguishes between the pause of heart block and the pause following premature beats. The extra sound produced by the premature beat may be readily ausculted. The first stage of heart block eludes detection, however, and the electrocardiogram must be depended upon to make the diagnosis.

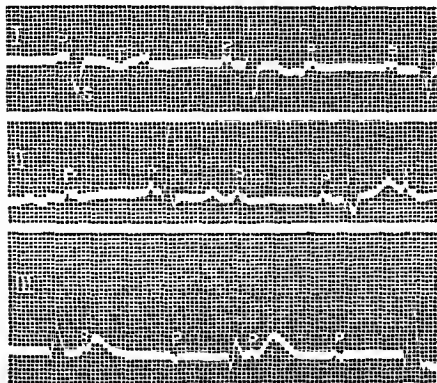


FIG. 211. Complete heart block. Auricular rate: 76. Ventricular rate: 38. The sinus node continues to control auricular activity but the ventricles beat in response to a pacemaker that initiates impulses for contraction at a slower rate, below the site of the lesion.

With progress in the lesion, the blocked impulses may occur after each second beat (Fig. 210). This is known as two to one heart block. The ventricular rate is exactly half the auricular rate. Complete dissociation or complete heart block between auricles and ventricles next occurs (Fig. 211), and in order to survive, the ventricles must establish a new center for impulse production below the level of the lesion. This is exactly what happens, the new center generally forming in the auriculoventricular tissues above the branching of the bundle. The ventricular beats that are produced by stimuli from this site at a rate of 30 to 40 per minute show slight differences when compared to normal beats. Often the disease process may extend down the conduction system to a lower level, and the new

center may arise in one of the bundle branches. The ventricular complexes are then widened and resemble those obtained in block of the bundle branch.

Patients with heart block may be subject to Adams-Stokes attacks at the time when complete heart block occurs. The electrocardiograph in recent years has shed considerable light on the mechanism of cardiac action during and following these seizures. Our laboratory has succeeded in taking tracings of three patients during Adams-Stokes seizures. Two of

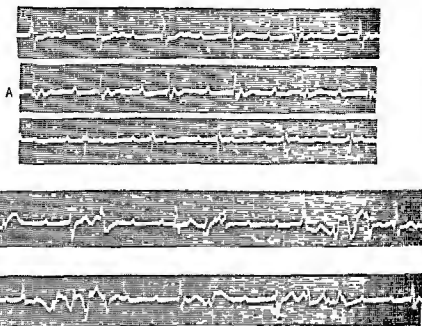


FIG. 212. The electrocardiogram during Adams-Stokes seizures. For explanation see text.

these patients developed attacks in the course of A-V heart block, complicating hypertensive cardiovascular disease, and the third following the onset of complete heart block that accompanied an acute (posterior) coronary occlusion. The complete electrocardiographic records of cases 79 and 80 are included here with detailed interpretation.

\* FIG. 212 A (Case 79) shows persisting complete heart block with auricular rate 88 and ventricular rate 44. The QRS complexes are notched and widened in all leads, and left axis deviation is present. Strips similar to B were observed to occur immediately prior to an onset of Adams-Stokes seizure. Here there are numerous premature beats occurring singly, and at the end of the strip in pairs. The auricular rate following the ectopic beats is more rapid than in the controls, averaging 107 beats per minute. Strip C of Fig. 212 is similar to B with the exception of the number of premature ventricular beats seen to occur in succession. Short runs of three are present at the beginning and end of the strip.

In Fig. 213 Strips A, B, and the first half of C represent a continuous tracing taken during an Adams-Stokes seizure. Strip A shows the prefibrillary type of ventricular tachy-

\* This fine print can be omitted by the reader without destroying the continuity of the text.

cardia with a rate of 210 per minute. Some slight irregularities are present in this strip, but on the whole all of the widened complexes conform to the same pattern. In strip B, from X1 to X2, there is a change in the configuration of the ventricular complexes; they become widened and differ in shape from beat to beat. The last part near X2 is quite typical of ventricular fibrillation. From the point X2 to the end of the strip B we again note the presence of the prefibrillary type of ventricular tachycardia. This arrhythmia continues throughout the first part of strip C. At the middle of C, a strip of tracing showing an arrhythmia similar to A and C is omitted. Thirty seconds later the second part of strip C was obtained, this shows a typical attack of ventricular fibrillation. Note the presence in this strip of auricular beats. Strip D is continuous

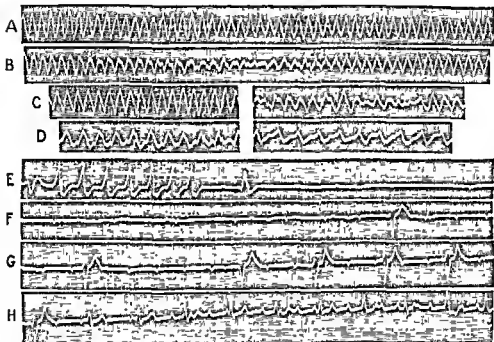


FIG. 213. Electrocardiogram recorded during Adams-Stokes seizure. See text for explanation.

with C and shows emergence from an attack of ventricular fibrillation. The QRS groups are widened and slurred, and there appears to be a P-wave before each QRS group. The width of the QRS complexes decreases toward the end of the strip. The last half of strip D taken a minute later shows bizarre configuration of the QRS groups with S-T interval depression. Ten attacks were recorded showing electrocardiographic findings similar to those described above.

The next attack is shown in strips E to H of Fig. 213; this is a continuous record and is included to show a different type of emergence. In strip E the QRS complexes are markedly aberrant with deep S-T intervals. The rate of these complexes gradually decreases toward the end of the strip. There is a slight pause toward the middle of the strip, and this is followed by an ectopic beat which initiates a period of ventricular standstill lasting 16.8 seconds. Auricular beats are seen, at first coming through at a very slow rate and then gradually increasing in frequency. A ventricular ectopic beat is seen toward the end of the strip; this initiates a return of the ventricular beats which occur first at a cycle length of 4.6, and then 4.2, and 2.0 seconds. The rate of the ventricular beats gradually increases until at the beginning of strip H the rate ap

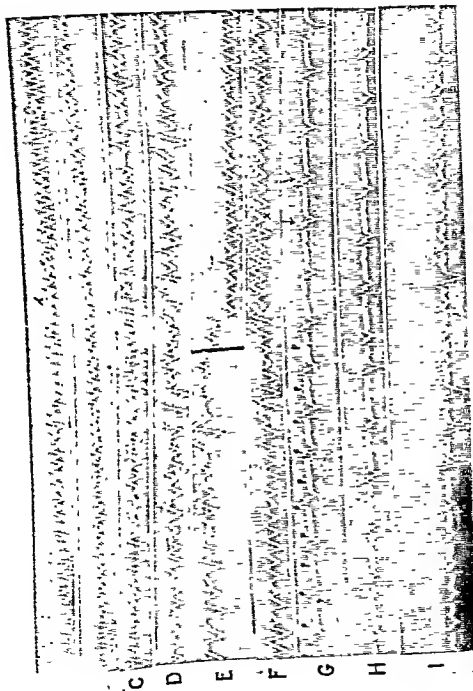


FIG. 210. Atrial tachycardia terminating in ventricular fibrillation with recovery. For detailed explanation, see text.

proaches 50 per minute. The auricular rate in this strip is also rapid, averaging 125 per minute. Looking back on the auricular beats in strips E and F, they will be seen to vary in shape. This is probably because of the fact that the beats arise from different foci in the auricular muscle.

Fig. 214 shows additional interesting features of some of the shorter paroxysms that were recorded. Strips A and B are continuous. At the start of strip A there are five successive ventricular premature beats followed by a pause. The next ventricular premature beat initiates a short paroxysm of the prefibrillary type of ventricular tachycardia. The shape and the amplitude of the ventricular complexes of this paroxysm show a gradual change. The last cycles are quite aberrant. Strip B shows complete A-V heart



FIG. 214. Tracings recorded during shorter seizures in same patient. See text for explanation.

block interrupted by numerous premature beats from various foci. C, D, and E are continuous strips. In the first part of C we note a paroxysm of prefibrillary type of ventricular tachycardia. This ends with the appearance of an idioventricular rhythm, the rate of which is 52 per minute. The idioventricular center, however, apparently fails for a period of 8.2 seconds, during which time complete cardiac standstill is observed. The auricular beats are likewise absent in this strip. The function of the idioventricular center gradually returns, and occasional cycles are seen in strip D. These recur with greater frequency until a rate of 46 per minute is reached in strip E. The ventricular complexes, however, are considerably widened, measuring 0.16 second. There is complete absence of auricular beats from point Y in strip C to point Z in strip D. In the beginning of strip E the auricular rate is slow, measuring 40 per minute, this gradually increases in frequency until at the end of strip E it approaches the rate of 100 per minute. Strips F and G are a continuous tracing. At the beginning of strip F there is a short paroxysm of the prefibrillary type of ventricular tachycardia, terminating in a single ventricular ectopic beat. Following this the idioventricular center continues to be interrupted by the occurrence of numerous ventricular premature

beats, some in couples and others appearing in pairs. Strip G shows several paroxysms of the prefibrillary ventricular tachycardia with ventricular complexes of different types.

Fig. 215 A shows a three lead control tracing of the type obtained on the patient whose history appears in Case 80. A two to one A-V heart block with auricular rate of 80 and ventricular rate of 40 is present. Note the widening and notching of the QRS complexes in leads 2 and 3. In strip B, sinus rhythm is seen with prolongation

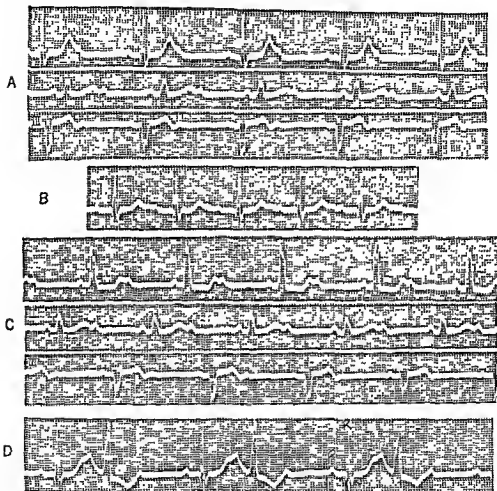


FIG. 215. Control tracings (Case 80) taken before onset of Adams-Stokes seizures. For explanation see text.

of the P-R intervals to 0.32 second. Strip C shows a two to one heart block with QRS complexes notched and widened in all leads. Note the difference between QRS<sub>1</sub> of this strip and QRS<sub>1</sub> of strip A. Strip D shows a two to one heart block with coupled ventricular premature beats from various foci. This tracing preceded the paroxysm of prefibrillary type of ventricular tachycardia.

In Fig 216, A to F is a continuous tracing, obtained during a typical Adams-Stokes seizure. Strip A shows a prefibrillary type of ventricular tachycardia with ventricular rate of 300 per minute. These complexes present a definite regularity in rate as well as in form, although in different places in the lead a slight difference in

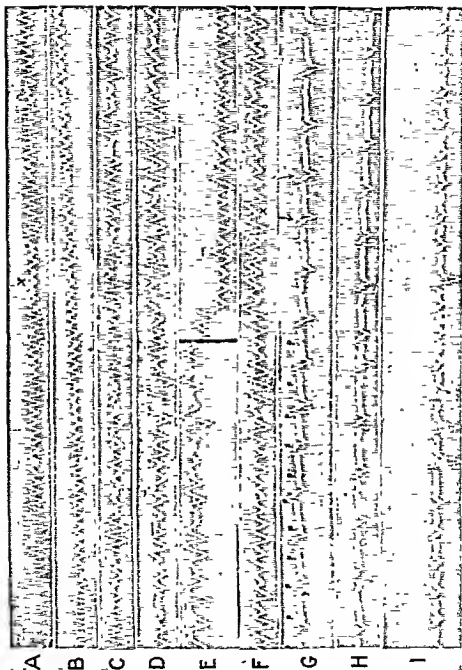


FIG. 216. Long piroxym of prefibrillatory type of ventricular tachycardia terminating in ventricular fibrillation with recovery. For detailed explanation, see text.



shape is noted. For instance, at point X sufficient irregularity exists to constitute a short paroxysm of ventricular fibrillation. The first third of strip B is the same as A; in the last two-thirds of this strip the ventricular complexes are seen to become more irregular than in the previous strip. From the end of strip B and including strips C, D, E, and F, we see a continuous paroxysm of ventricular fibrillation. Note the extreme irregularity in the size, amplitude, and sequence of the ventricular complexes. In some places a semblance of regularity may be noted, but this is present for an extremely brief period. The total duration of this paroxysm of ventricular fibrillation is 42 seconds. Auricular beats can be noted in places during the above paroxysm. Figure 216 (G to I) was made a few seconds after the end of the paroxysm and shows complete A-V dissociation with auricular rate of 140 and a ventricular rate of 64. Note the R-T elevation in the initial cycles, gradually decreasing toward the end of the strip where the R-T segments are practically at the isoelectric line. Here the auricular rate and the idioventricular rhythm are much more rapid than in the control tracing. This is not infrequently observed immediately following emergence from a paroxysm, the anoxic state acting as a stimulant to the respective centers. Note that the last cycle of strip G is aberrant. Strip H shows that the grade of heart block is now two to one, indicating a return to more normal function across the A-V nodal tissues. This is maintained to the end of the strip with a gradual increase in the rate of the idioventricular center. Strip I shows a prolongation of the P-R intervals to 0.32 second with a one to one response. Occasional ectopic beats are seen.

The Adams-Stokes seizure recorded here was the only one that the patient had during her two weeks' stay in the hospital. She was ambulatory on discharge. A follow-up letter at the end of five months found her in fairly good condition. She reported no recurrence of the seizures.

### BUNDLE-BRANCH BLOCK

Various pathologic processes may cause block of the bundle on either side. The appearance of the electrocardiogram obtained under these cir-

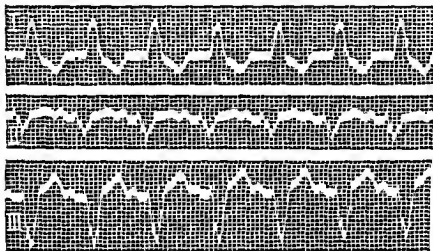


FIG. 217. Bundle-branch block. Note the widened, notched QRS complexes with the T-wave opposite in direction to the main complex. This is common type of tracing. It results from block of the left bundle-branch.

cumstances may be understood if we follow the happenings in the heart. The ventricle on the side of the intact bundle-branch contracts first. The

impulse then travels through nonspecialized muscle tissue to the opposite ventricle where a delayed contraction occurs. This is reflected in the appearance of the electrocardiogram. The QRS group is widened because of the longer time consumed by the impulse in spreading through nonspecialized tissue of the muscle and notched because of the irregularity of this spread. The T-waves are usually opposite in direction to the main deflection of the QRS. Increased voltage of the QRS is usually present. To determine the site of the lesion, apply the same rule as in axis devia-

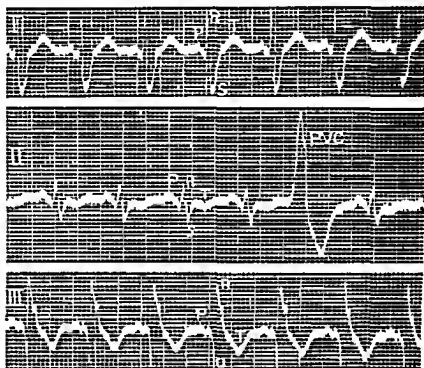


FIG. 218. Right bundle-branch block. An isolated premature ventricular contraction is seen in lead 2. This is uncommon type of bundle-branch block.

tion.\* For example, in Fig. 217 the QRS groups are upward in lead 1 and downward in lead 3. This is complete block of the left bundle-branch (common type). In Fig. 218 the QRS groups are down in lead 1 and up in lead 3. This is complete block of the right bundle-branch. At times we see the QRS groups widened and directed upward in all three leads. Although previously referred to as arborization block or block in the Purkinje network, these tracings are now regarded as partial block of the main bundle branches (Fig. 219). In some cases of this type the bundle-branch block may not be complete, and a return to normal conduction may be seen every third or fourth beat (Fig. 220).

\* This is still a controversial question. Some authors do not agree with the views presented here.

When bundle-branch block is seen, we can usually be safe in suspecting myocardial damage. There are, however, some exceptions to this rule. When a bundle-branch block is associated with a short P-R interval (Fig. 221), it should not be viewed as a sign of disease. These patients

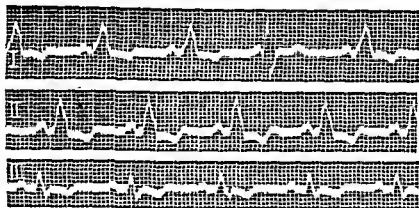


FIG. 219. Intraventricular block.

are often subject to attacks of paroxysmal rapid heart action. To explain the occurrence of functional heart block of the bundle-branch type, it has been claimed that an additional conduction pathway (bundle of Kent)

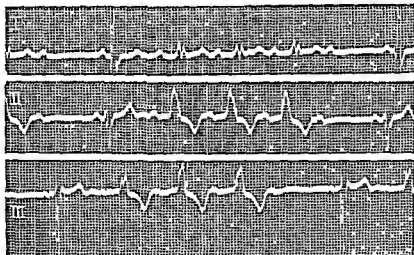


FIG. 220. Transient bundle-branch block.

is present that transmits the impulse in a shorter time than it takes to traverse the usual pathway. In some cases a series of sudden attacks of paroxysmal tachycardia arising from an auricular focus may severely tax the conduction system. Notching of the QRS may be present, and in some cases a widening of the QRS may be seen in normal individuals. Here

again is an instance where the electrocardiogram must be interpreted entirely in the light of the clinical findings.

A diagrammatic summary of the more common types of tracings associated with block at various levels in the conduction system is shown in Fig. 222.

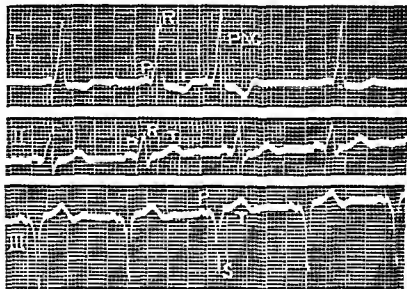


FIG. 221. Bundle-branch block with short P-R Intervals.

### AURICULAR FLUTTER

The term auricular flutter has been advanced for an uncommon but interesting derangement of auricular function characterized by the establishment of an abnormal circulating contraction or flutter wave. Flutter is supposedly produced by the continual passage of this wave around the auricular musculature near the entrance of the great veins (circus movement). Each time the wave passes, there is a radial spreading of the contraction impulse (Fig. 223). When the electrocardiogram records this movement of the flutter wave, in a favorable lead the string will be seen to be in continual motion. The auricular rates in cases of flutter are high, averaging from 250 to 360 per minute. Fortunately the ventricle, even if healthy, could not respond to all the impulses arriving at the A-V node. Usually every second impulse penetrates and causes a ventricular contraction, i.e., a two-to-one heart block is present. Varying grades of block may appear, consequently the pulse at the wrist in auricular flutter may be 120 to 170. When the slower ventricular rates are present, the condition is often missed because it is unsuspected. In flutter the heart rate is constant in all positions. Pressure over the carotid sinus, however, may be used to distinguish between paroxysmal tachycardia and flutter. If flutter

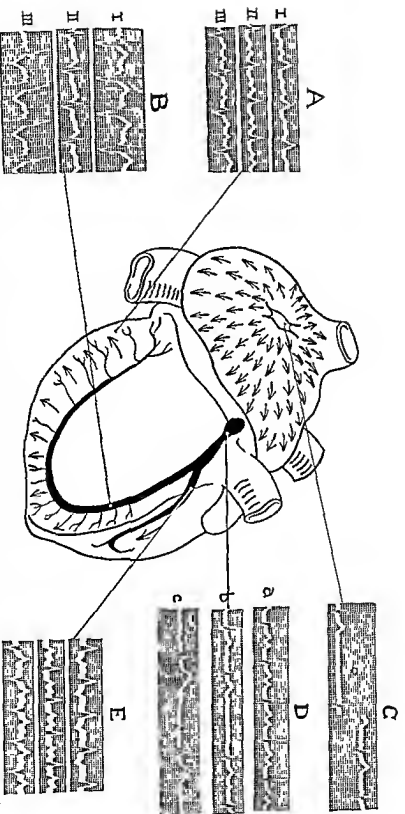


FIG. 222. Diagram illustrating various types of block and the site of the lesion in the conduction system in each instance. A: Intraventricular (arborization) block. B: Right bundle-branch block. C: Sinus arrest (sino-auricular block). D: Heart block. a: Prolongation of P-R interval (first stage). b: Dropped beats. c: Complete dissociation. E: Left bundle-branch block.

is present, carotid-sinus pressure may cause a sudden halving of the pulse rate. If this does not take place, the pulse in flutter will usually become

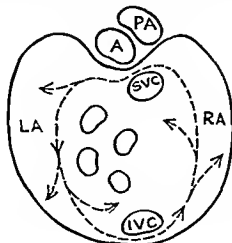


FIG. 223. Diagram showing course of flutter wave in the auricle (Redrawn from Pardee).\*

slower and often irregular. Carotid-sinus pressure in cases of flutter may even cause ventricular stand-still, while in paroxysmal tachycardia if the

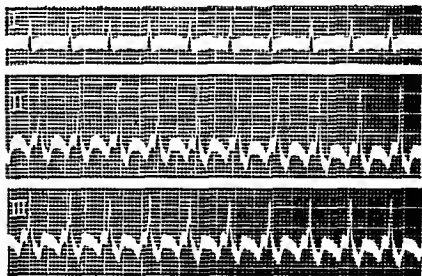


FIG. 224. Auricular flutter. The ventricle contracts following each second revolution of the circus wave (2:1 response).

attack is not stopped and normal rhythm restored, no effect whatsoever will be noted on the rate or rhythm of the pulse. If the patient is in re-

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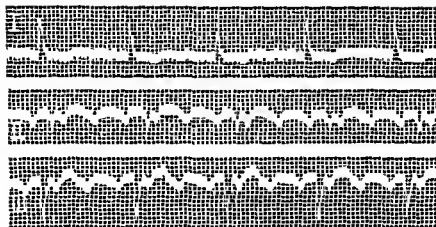


FIG. 225. Auricular flutter. There is a ventricular response to every third flutter wave (3:1 response).

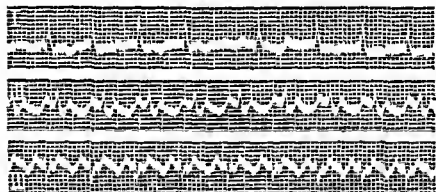


FIG. 226. Auricular flutter. In lead 1 note the varying degrees of ventricular response

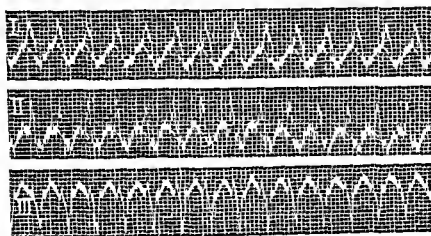


FIG. 227. Auricular flutter - 1 to 1 ventricular response.

cumbency in the proper light, the neck veins may be distinctly visible, in which event the very rapid flutter movements are often observed as they are transmitted back along the venous column from the auricle. In many

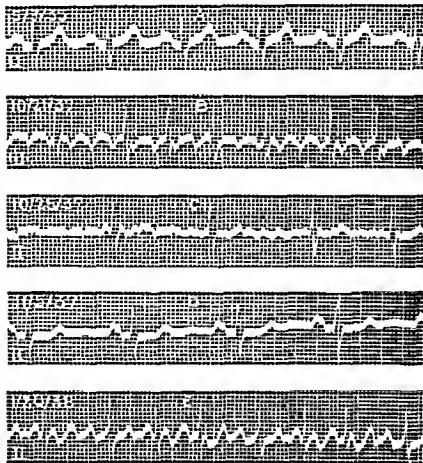


FIG. 123. Series of electrocardiograms (lead 2) illustrating the effect of digitalis on auricular flutter. A. Normal rhythm. B. Auricular flutter. Varying degrees of ventricular response. C. Following administration of digitalis. The flutter has been converted into fibrillation. D. After withdrawal of digitalis, normal rhythm appears. E. Recurrence of flutter two months later. This patient had rheumatic heart disease, cardiac enlargement and advanced mitral stenosis.

cases, although flutter may be suspected, it cannot be diagnosed without an electrocardiogram.

The appearance of the tracing in auricular flutter is characteristic (Fig. 224). The flutter waves are generally seen to the best advantage in leads 2 and 3 where they appear as uniform up and down oscillations. Closer inspection shows that the auricles as a whole appear to enjoy no period



of diastole, for there is seen no beginning and no ending of the auricular movement. The ventricular rate in flutter depends on the degree of A-V block. While a two-to-one block is usually present, higher and even varying degrees of block are not uncommon (Figs. 225, 226, 228). A few cases where the ventricle has responded to every wave of the circus movement (one-to-one response) are on record. These are serious happenings, particularly in diseased hearts, since the strain on the myocardium is usually proportional to the increase in the ventricular rate. The patient whose tracing appears in Fig. 227 was a housewife of 52 who suffered from coronary disease and hypertension. She died suddenly a few minutes after the onset of an attack of auricular flutter with a one-to-one response. This fatal attack was similar to the one recorded here.

Digitalis is the drug of choice in flutter and should be given in full dosage to increase the grade of A-V block. Following digitalis a two-to-one response may be converted into a four to one. The action of this drug may be watched by a series of electrocardiograms. If the digitalis is continued, fibrillation replaces the flutter; and when the drug is withdrawn, sinus rhythm usually returns (Fig. 228). Although quinidine has been recommended, digitalis is generally more successful in bringing relief to the patient with this type of circus movement and is the drug of choice. Flutter commonly complicates thyrotoxic and rheumatic heart disease and may appear suddenly in patients suffering from arteriosclerotic heart disease. It may occasionally appear in patients of any age who have apparently normal hearts (paroxysmal flutter) (page 391).

### AURICULAR FIBRILLATION

Auricular fibrillation is closely allied to auricular flutter and is by far

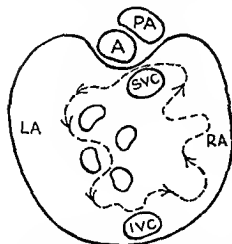


FIG. 229. Diagram showing irregular course followed by the fibrillation waves in the auricular muscle.

the most important of the cardiac arrhythmias. Here again it may be useful to recall the circus movement theory of Garrey in order to obtain a clear understanding of this mechanism. In flutter the circus movement takes the same pathway through the auricular muscle at each revolution. In fibrillation the course of the circus is wholly erratic (Fig. 229). It weaves its way in and out of the auricular myocardium in an irregular fashion taking the course permitted by the physiologic state of the muscle at the moment. Co-ordinated auricular contractions cease. The circuits of fibrillation are completed at varying times but are al-

ways more rapid than in flutter. Auricular fibrillary rates of 400 to 600 are not uncommon. In consequence the ventricular response to the series of rapid irregular impulses arriving at the A-V node is likewise irregular. A typical electrocardiogram of fibrillation is shown in Fig. 230. Note first the absence of the usual P-waves that represent co-ordinated auricular contraction. At times in place of the auricular waves a series of irregular "f" or fibrillation waves appear. The QRS groups in auricular fibrillation are irregularly spaced and are of supraventricular type, i.e., the origin of the beat is above the junctional or A-V tissues.

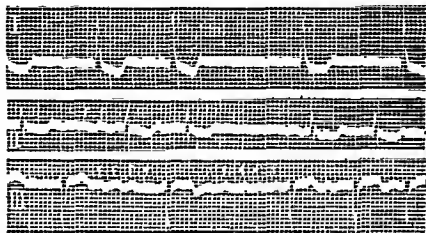


FIG. 230. Auricular fibrillation. Note total irregularity of the rhythm. The P-waves are replaced by "f" waves (seen best in lead 3 of this tracing). Note the depression of the S-T intervals in leads 1 and 2 caused by digitalis. Left axis deviation is also present.

The diagnosis of auricular fibrillation can nearly always be made clinically. However, if the ventricular rate is slow, it may elude detection. If it is possible to exercise the patient, the distinction may be made at once, since exercise increases the pulse irregularity in fibrillation. At times premature beats occur with such frequency that the cardiac rhythm is entirely irregular. Exercise abolishes the premature beats, and the rhythm of the heart becomes regular. Premature beats may occur with auricular fibrillation, but they arise always from a nodal or ventricular focus and never from a focus in the midst of such auricular turmoil.

Auricular fibrillation may be permanent or paroxysmal. The former is more common. In rare cases the paroxysmal variety may be present and represent the only abnormality in the cardiac examination (page 395).

The "f" or fibrillation waves may be quite prominent (Fig. 230), especially when the arrhythmia complicates mitral stenosis, and hypertrophy of the auricular muscle is present. On the other hand, in hearts with poor auricular myocardium, the "f" waves may be small or scarcely visible at all (Fig. 231). In some leads the "f" waves may be so regular that they

suggest the presence of auricular flutter (Fig. 228 C). The term "impure flutter" has been employed by some laboratories to designate this type of electrocardiogram and may be retained if preferred, for these tracings probably represent a transition stage between flutter and fibrillation.

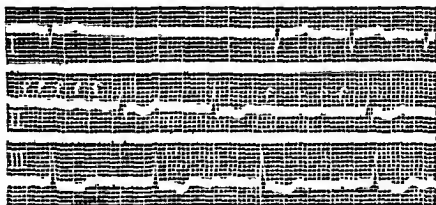


FIG. 231. Auricular fibrillation. Note absence of P-waves, the total irregularity of rhythm. The S-T Intervals are depressed in leads 2 and 3. Right axis deviation is present.

### CORONARY ARTERY DISEASE INCLUDING ACUTE MYOCARDIAL INFARCTION

Myocardial infarction that follows the occlusion of a coronary vessel produces characteristic alterations in the form of the electrocardiogram. A study of these changes often enables the physician to state the site of the infarct, while frequently repeated tracings or serial electrocardiograms are helpful in following the healing process.

In recent years the contributions to this branch of electrocardiography have been many. However, a uniformity of opinion on all issues unfortunately does not prevail at this writing. The terminology is likewise in an unsettled state. While the recent standardization of the direct or precordial leads will ultimately be of great value, at present much confusion exists regarding the interpretation of the tracings taken by the various techniques. In this brief sketch of electrocardiography, I will try to avoid as much as possible the controversial points and briefly state the facts that appear at this time to be definitely established.

At the start we must realize that the coronary arteries cannot influence the form of the electrocardiogram unless the blood flow through them is temporarily or permanently interrupted and the cardiac muscle is affected. If serious disease of the walls of the coronary arteries is present but so situated that it does not interfere with the nourishment of the heart muscle, no alterations appear. For this reason an electrocardiographic diagnosis of uncomplicated coronary sclerosis is impossible. However, if a coronary artery is suddenly occluded with the production of an area of myocardial infarction, marked changes usually appear sooner or later in the electro-

cardiogram in well over 90 per cent of the cases. These changes, first described by Pardee in 1920, take place in the RS-T segment of one or more leads. They consist of a downward, sharply peaked T-wave (coronary T-wave of Pardee) with an upward convexity of the RS-T interval (Fig. 232). Following an acute infarction the RS-T segment arises above the iso-electric level (monophasic curve). As healing progresses, the RS-T interval returns to the base line.

The tracings obtained in the presence of an area of acute infarction usually fall into two groups. Barnes and Whitten (1929) first designated

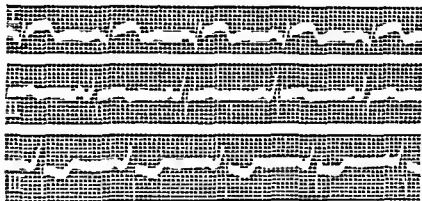


FIG. 232. Electrocardiogram made 12 hours after an attack of severe chest pain in a man of 50 suffering from hypertensive cardiovascular disease. Note the typical RS-T interval elevation in lead 1 and the depression of the same segment in lead 3.

these as the  $T_1$  and  $T_3$  types. The  $T_1$  pattern is characteristic of an infarction involving the anterior portion of the left ventricle and consists of an elevation of the RS-T segment in lead 1 and a depression of the RS-T segment in lead 3 (Fig. 232). Infarction of the posterior basal portion of the left ventricle produces an elevation of the RS-T segment in lead 3 and a depression of the same interval in lead 1 (Fig. 233).

Later investigations by Wilson (1933) first called attention to the importance of the initial deflection or Q-wave in the diagnosis and localization of areas of infarction. This investigator referred to the  $Q_1$  and  $Q_3$  types. In the  $Q_1$  type associated with an anterior infarction, the Q-wave appears and persists in lead 1 (Fig. 234), while a posterior infarction may produce a deep Q-wave in lead 3 (see Fig. 237). It may be demonstrated by animal experimentation that curves of these types are routinely produced by an injury to the cardiac muscle of either the right or left ventricle.<sup>21</sup>

Following an occlusion the area of injured muscle undergoes change from day to day. This is reflected in the electrocardiogram, but each patient will be found to differ in regard to the speed with which this variation takes place. Characteristic alterations may appear in the RS-T intervals 30 min-

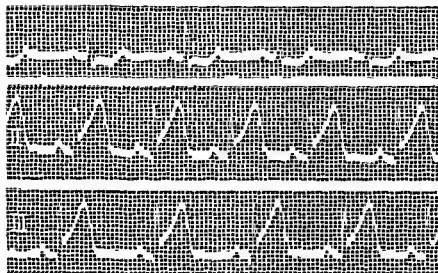


FIG. 233. Tracing taken three hours after an attack of "acute indigestion" in a laborer of 40. Both father and mother suffered from coronary disease with anginal seizures. Note the RS-T interval alterations in leads 2 and 3. The descending limb of the QRS group does not return to the base line but continues into a large T-wave (monophasic curve).

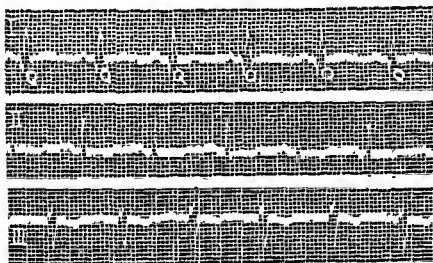


FIG. 234. Evidence suggesting an old anterior coronary occlusion. Note the Q-wave in lead 1, the flat  $T_1$  and diphasic  $T_2$ . Inversion of  $T_3$  and left axis deviation are also present.

utes after the seizure or they may be delayed for several days. For this reason serial studies are advisable whenever the clinical features are suggestive and the initial electrocardiogram is negative.

While the electrocardiogram in coronary occlusion may change its form from day to day, the alterations are more marked and more rapid during the first weeks following the accident. When healing of the infarct is complete, the indirect (limb) leads may show a return to the normal configuration. Frequently, however, the T-waves will remain inverted, and their peculiar cove-like shape should at once arouse suspicion concerning their mode of origin (see Fig. 238). The clinical history should then be searched for proof. At times RS-T deformities may return to normal with healing of the infarct, but the reduction of the blood supply to a vital spot like the bundle of His may result in delayed conduction and a permanent prolongation of the P-R interval. However, when the only remaining feature of the occlusion is deeply inverted  $T_3$ , care should be used in its interpretation, since inversion of  $T_3$  is not an uncommon finding in normal electrocardiograms. If a deep  $Q_3$  is present, we are more certain of the meaning of the deep  $T_3$ , but in the absence of the Q-wave in lead 3, the clinical history is the only guide in the interpretation. Lead 2 may help in making the decision. "M-" or "W-shaped" complexes in lead 2 as well as a deep  $Q_3$  should always make us suspicious of an old posterior infarction (see Fig. 182D).

Alterations in the auricular complex have also been observed to follow an occlusion of the coronary artery. Characteristic changes in the P-waves and the P-R segment have been produced in animals by compression of the auricular arteries and are directly related to the myocardial ischemia. Similar changes have been observed in man following coronary occlusion. There may be depression of the P-R segment with notching and inversion of the P-wave. Arrhythmias may occur with the displacement of the pacemaker from the S-A node.

Electrocardiograms following exercise are occasionally of value in clarifying the diagnosis of angina pectoris. Where an objective method is desirable in insurance examinations or when the history is typical but the patient neurotic, the appearance of characteristic changes in the RS-T intervals or T-waves of the electrocardiogram following exercise may be valuable. The normal patient will show no alteration in the T-waves after exertion nor will he show depression of the RS-T intervals exceeding 1 mm. below the base line. The patient with angina may show depression or elevation of the S-T interval of over 1 mm. in leads 1 and 2 following exercise, often associated with some T-wave inversion. However, a negative result does not exclude the diagnosis of angina.

Similar alterations in the RS-T segment and T-wave of the electrocardiogram have been produced by Levy and his co-workers in patients suffering from coronary sclerosis by inducing anoxemia.<sup>222</sup> A special apparatus is used for this test by means of which the patient breathes a constant percentage mixture of oxygen. Levy reports alterations in the T-wave in amplitude

d occasionally in direction and depression of the RS-T segments in the direct leads. This test may also be of great value when the diagnosis is doubtful.

### PRECORDIAL LEADS

Studies of the usual three leads by various groups of workers soon demonstrated that coronary occlusion in some instances could occur in the absence of the characteristic electrocardiographic alterations just described.

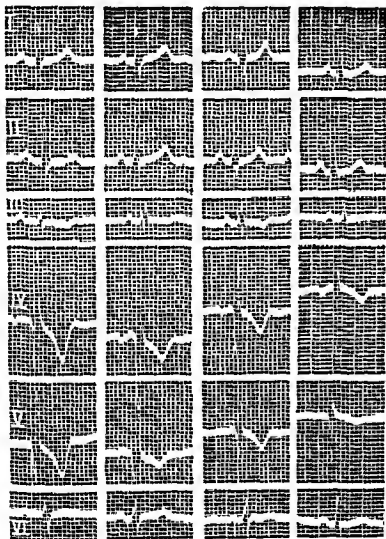


FIG. 235. Series of normal six lead electrocardiograms taken by the old technic. Lead 4—between apex beat and angle of left scapula; lead 5—between the apex beat and the left leg, lead 6—between the angle of the left scapula and the left leg. Note the deep Q-waves in leads 4 and 5 and inverted T-waves in the same leads.

Consequently the re-introduction by Wood and Wolferth<sup>420</sup> in 1931 of Waller's method (1887) of applying electrodes directly to the chest wall was a valuable advance that greatly increased the efficiency of the electrocardiographic method in the diagnosis of cardiac infarction. These investigators recommended a fourth lead obtained by applying the right arm electrode over the apex beat and the left leg electrode directly opposite

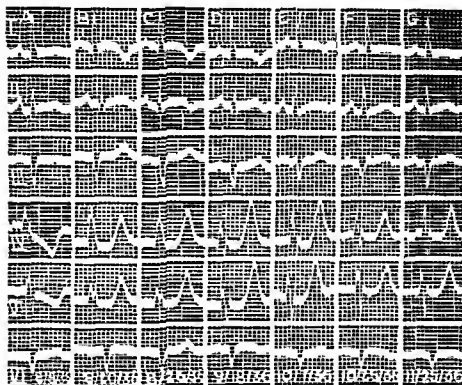


FIG 236 Serial tracings following attack of coronary occlusion (Case 40). The direct leads (4, 5 and 6) were taken by the old technic. In A the T-waves in leads 4 and 5 are inverted. In B they are upright. Note the succession of changes in the T-waves in leads 1 and 2 from A to G. In G the indirect leads are almost normal. The alterations persist in the T-waves of the direct leads.

on the back of the chest at the level of the angle of the scapula. In this original fourth lead (Fig. 235) the first deflection was normally downward and was referred to as a Q-wave, the following upward deflection was termed an R-wave and the last deflection normally directed downward was called the T-wave.

Various studies of the fourth lead soon showed that in some cases it exhibited the characteristic features of occlusion when the usual three leads were normal. In other instances it was found that it aided considerably in establishing more firmly the diagnosis suggested by the limb leads. In



the presence of acute infarction in the anterior portion of the left ventricle,

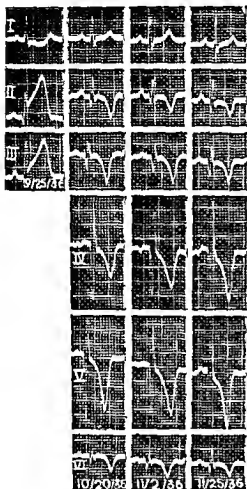


FIG. 237

significant changes occur in the fourth lead (Fig. 236). The Q-wave disappears. The S-T segment is depressed. Gradually  $T_4$  becomes upright and increases in height. The T-wave may later return to normal, but the Q-wave in this lead does not reappear. When  $Q_4$  is absent in the direct lead obtained by the use of the old technic, this finding should always suggest a previous anterior infarction, even in the presence of normal indirect leads.

A posterior infarction produces

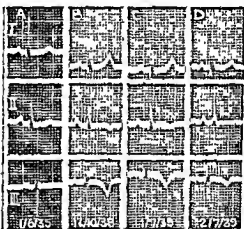


FIG. 238

FIG. 237. Serial tracings (old direct leads) following posterior coronary occlusion. While  $T_1$  and  $T_2$  are deeply inverted, the changes in the usual or indirect leads are characteristic and furnish sufficient evidence in this case.

FIG. 238. Serial tracings (Indirect leads). Patient an American woman of 55 who had no signs of cardiovascular disease on physical examination. The blood pressure was 120/80. Urine negative. Blood sugar normal. A. Electrocardiogram was made because of pain in the left elbow. The pain was dull and unrelated to exertion. Similar tracings were obtained over the course of three years. B. Taken one week after an attack of "indigestion" The pain was epigastric and lasted a few minutes. The findings suggest an area of infarction on the posterior surface of the heart when compared to A. C and D show gradual disappearance of the signs from the record. If D was obtained and other records of this patient were not available, a diagnosis of coronary occlusion could not be made.

changes in the fourth lead that are usually transient and much less marked. The RS-T segment is elevated, and the depth of the T-wave diminishes.

The Q-wave remains. These changes fade rapidly, and subsequent tracings show Q and T-waves of increased amplitude. In my experience the standard leads reflect the changes of a posterior infarction much more clearly than lead 4 (Fig. 237). Consequently, while the precordial lead is a valuable aid in the diagnosis of various types of myocardial injury, study of the usual indirect leads should not be neglected (Fig. 238).

When the use of the fourth lead became popular, many laboratories, as the result of continued experimentation with a number of connections from various locations on the thorax, adopted their own combinations. As a result no unanimity of opinion existed as to where the electrodes should be placed. The confused situation that resulted discouraged the practitioner's attempts to learn at this time the features of many of the different combinations of chest leads. A standard method of applying electrodes was very much needed to clarify the situation. To this end in 1938 a joint committee appointed by the American Heart Association and the Cardiac Society of Great Britain and Ireland considered the matter and made the following recommendations with reference to the routine use of a single precordial lead.\*<sup>352</sup>

1. It is recommended that those who employ a single precordial lead place the precordial electrode upon the extreme outer border of the apex beat, as determined by palpation. If the apex beat cannot be located satisfactorily by palpation, the electrode may be placed in the fifth intercostal space just outside the left border of cardiac dulness, or just outside the left midclavicular line if percussion of the heart is unsatisfactory. Where prerordial leads are taken by a technical assistant, the position of the precordial electrode should be marked on the chest by the physician.

2. It is recommended that a single precordial lead in which the precordial electrode has the location specified in the preceding paragraph be known as *Lead IV B* when this electrode is paired with an electrode in the left interscapular region; *Lead IV R* when it is paired with an electrode on the right arm; *Lead IV L* when it is paired with an electrode on the left arm, *Lead IV F* when it is paired with an electrode on the left leg, and *Lead IV T* when it is paired with a central terminal connected through equal resistances of 5,000 or more ohms to electrodes on each of the three extremities mentioned.

It is suggested that for all ordinary purposes *Lead IV R* or *Lead IV F* be employed. The latter lead should have the preference until it has been established that the former, which is somewhat more convenient, is equivalent to the latter for all practical purposes or yields results of equal value.

3. It is recommended that in taking the precordial leads specified, the galvanometer connections be made in such a way that relative positivity of the apical electrode is represented in the finished curve by an upward deflection (a deflection above the isopotential level) and relative negativity of the apical electrode by a downward deflection.

It is urged that this convention be adhered to in case of precordial leads other than those specified, and also in the case of all leads in which the one electrode is placed much closer to the heart than the other. In other words, it shall be the standard convention in taking such leads to make the galvanometer connections in such a way that relative positivity of the electrode nearer the heart is represented by an upward deflection.

4. It is recommended that with the galvanometer connections made as described in

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the preceding paragraph, the deflections of precordial leads be designated by the symbols P, Q, R, S, and T, and that in the application of these symbols the same conventions be employed as in the case of the standard limb leads.

5. It is recommended that in taking precordial leads the electrocardiograph be so adjusted that a deflection of one centimeter in the finished record corresponds to a potential difference of one millivolt as in the case of the standard limb leads. Any reduction in sensitivity made necessary by very large deflections should be clearly indicated on the curve, preferably by photographing the effect of introducing a potential difference of one millivolt into the galvanometer circuit.

6. It is recommended that the greatest dimension of the apical electrode employed in taking the leads specified in this report be 3 cm. or less. A circular electrode between 2 cm. and 3 cm. in diameter should ordinarily be employed (see Fig. 174).

7. It is recommended that the terms Lead IV (R, F, etc.), apical lead, apex-leg lead, etc. be used henceforth only in connection with the leads specified in this report.

The standardization of the single precordial lead accomplished, the American Heart Association has added a supplementary report for the workers who wish to employ multiple precordial leads. A summary of the report follows.

### MULTIPLE PRECORDIAL LEADS

When leads from two or more precordial points are employed, it is suggested that the precordial electrode be paired either with an electrode on the left leg or with a central terminal connected through an equal resistance of 5000 or more ohms to electrodes on the right arm, left arm, and left leg. It is suggested further that in the first case the letters CF followed by a subscript and in the second case the letter V followed by a subscript be employed to designate such leads.

The position of the precordial electrode shall be indicated by the subscript used according to the following plan: subscript 1 shall be used for the right margin of the sternum; 2, for the left margin of the sternum; 3, for a line midway between the left margin of the sternum and the left midclavicular line; 4, for the left midclavicular line; 5, for the anterior axillary line; and 6, for the left midaxillary line. When the letters and subscripts specified are employed, it shall be understood that in the case of the sternal leads, the precordial electrode has been placed in the fourth intercostal space, and that in the case of the other leads, it has been placed upon a line drawn from the left sternal margin in the fourth intercostal space to the outer border of the apex beat (or to a point at the junction of the midclavicular line and the fifth intercostal space) and continued around the left side of the chest at the level of the apex beat or of the junction mentioned.

The advantages of making the galvanometer connections in such a way that relative positivity of the precordial electrode is represented in the finished curve by an upward deflection and relative negativity of this electrode by a downward deflection are as follows:

1. This method makes it possible to assign the letters Q, R, and S to the individual deflections of the QRS group in exactly the same manner as in the case of the standard limb leads, without violating the general principle that, as far as possible, deflections which have the same origin or the same significance should invariably bear the same name. In particular, it makes it possible always to assign the same letter (R) to the onset of the intrinsic deflection, which signals the arrival of the impulse at the epicardial surface of the portion of the heart subjacent to the precordial electrode, without departing from the customary method of labelling the QRS deflections.

2. In cases of infarction of the anterior wall of the heart, this method yields ventricular complexes characterized by abnormally large initial downward deflections (Q-waves) and sharply inverted T-waves of the "cove plane" or "coronary" type. These complexes are practically identical with those which have long been considered

characteristic of myocardial infarction in the case of the standard leads, and they may be described in the same terms.

3. The P deflections and the T deflections are normally upright. There are great advantages, particularly from the standpoint of one who is teaching electrocardiography or of one who is beginning the study of this subject, in a system which makes upright T-waves invariably normal whatever the lead.

4. The use of the terms plus and minus and of the symbols + and - greatly simplifies things. In the case of the precordial leads one electrode, the precordial electrode,

is of much more importance than the other. In the discussion of the principles upon which the interpretation of the precordial electrocardiogram rests, it is necessary to refer frequently to the potential of the precordial electrode and in connection therewith to employ the terms and symbols mentioned. Since we are accustomed to speak of downward deflections as negative and to prefix measurements of such deflections as negative, much confusion and misunderstanding will be avoided if the deflection of the tracing is upward when the potential of the precordial electrode is positive and downward when the potential of the electrode is negative.

**Nomenclature.** For the convenience of those who wish to make statistical studies of the QRS group, to measure and tabulate the QRS deflections or to classify or characterize QRS deflections of different types, it is imperative that the individual deflections of the QRS group be designated by distinct symbols, even though the naming of these deflections may involve the application of rules more or less arbitrary.

The adoption in the case of precordial leads of symbols different from those employed in the case of the standard leads might have some advantages. This would, however, have at the same time tremendous disadvantages. It would add an entirely new terminology to clinical electrocardiography which is already regarded by many as an abstruse and incomprehensible subject, and would greatly increase the number of technical terms which beginners in this field would have to learn. It would invite other

attempts to improve upon electrocardiographic terminology, and would stand little chance of prompt and universal acceptance. The adoption of new symbols for the initial ventricular deflections would greatly complicate the use of such terms as the P-R interval, the QRS interval, the RS-T segment, and the RS-T displacement which could not then be logically used in reference to precordial leads. For these reasons it was decided that the deflections of the precordial leads should be designated by the same letters as those of the standard limb leads.

In addition to establishing uniformity in the connections for single or multiple precordial leads, these recommendations make the interpretation of the tracings much easier, since all the waves in the normal chest leads are upright. This also permits the precordial leads to be correctly

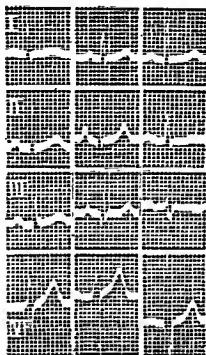


FIG. 239. Electrocardiograms of three normal persons including the direct lead (4F) recommended for routine use. Note normal variations.

designated by the same letters as those of the standard limb leads. Lead 4F is the direct lead recommended for routine use (Figs. 239, 240, 241).

While precordial leads display their greatest usefulness in the diagnosis of acute infarction, they are occasionally useful in the study of other con-

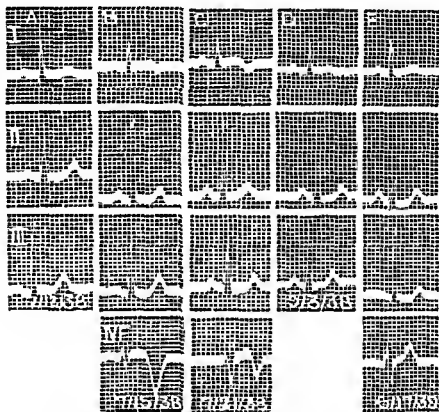


FIG. 240. Value of direct lead. Patient, a foreman of 48, admitted to Receiving Ward of Woman's College Hospital complaining of abdominal pain. He gave a history of "stomach trouble" and "indigestion" for five years. A tentative diagnosis of ruptured peptic ulcer was made. A Taken on admission. Indirect leads normal. B Taken six hours later. The direct lead 4F shows change suggestive of acute infarction (anterior). A slight alteration may be noted in the RS-T interval of the indirect lead C. Six days later change in RS-T interval in lead I more pronounced. D Two months later. Evidence fading from indirect leads E Follow-up examination a year later shows no evidence of presence of area of healed infarction.

ditions. For example, in the presence of puzzling auricular arrhythmias, the P-wave may be better visualized in the chest lead. For this record the chest electrode is placed over the middle or just to the left of the sternum. In making the differential diagnosis between acute coronary occlusion and pulmonary embolism, chest leads are helpful, while they permit a more complete study of myocardial injuries arising from other causes, for example, trauma, and pericarditis.

## DIAGNOSIS OF CORONARY OCCLUSION BY THE RHYTHM OF THE ELECTROCARDIOGRAM

Conduction disturbances are not infrequently observed following acute coronary occlusions. Since the bundle of His is supplied by a branch of the

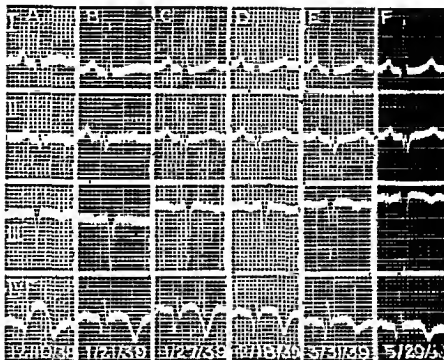


FIG. 241. Value of direct lead. Patient a salesman of 35, Blood pressure normal. Family history positive for coronary disease and angina (both father and mother). A. Taken three hours after onset of sharp pain in left shoulder. Usual or indirect leads while suggesting the presence of heart disease ("u" complex of lead 2) failed to show presence of area of infarction. Lead 4F, however, taken at the same time shows characteristic monophasic curve. While the T-waves in leads 1 and 2 of B are flat, there is no additional evidence in the indirect leads of the series of the presence of infarct. A series of characteristic changes may be seen in lead 4F.

right coronary artery, posterior occlusions may produce varying degrees of auriculoventricular block. Occlusions may also result in block of a bundle branch. The rich protective blood supply about the bundle of His and the re-establishment of the circulation to this area by collateral flow following the occlusion probably account for the return of normal in rhythm in Fig. 242. The sudden appearance of a cardiac irregularity of this type with or without chest pain should always suggest the possibility of coronary occlusion. The onset of the complete heart block in the patient whose tracing is shown in Fig. 243 was attended only by faintness, while the patient whose tracing appears in Fig. 244 had Adams-Stokes seizures

that occurred during the last six hours of life. The signs of posterior coronary occlusion usually accompany those of heart block. Note the alter-

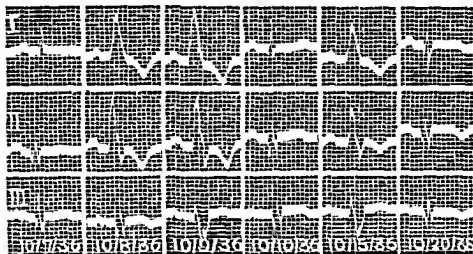


FIG. 242. Serial electrocardiographic studies (usual leads) taken over the course of two weeks following an acute coronary occlusion. Note the appearance of a bundle-branch defect on some days and the return subsequently of normal conduction. After four weeks of bed rest the characteristic widening of bundle-branch block did not reappear.

ation in the RS-T interval in leads 2 and 3 of Fig. 243. At times a bundle-branch defect may obscure the usual curves of infarction in both indirect and chest leads. Consequently in these cases it is hazardous to base a diag-

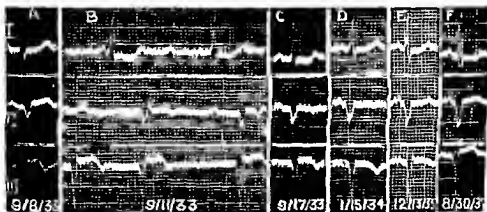


FIG. 243. Transient complete heart block following posterior coronary occlusion. See Case No. 43.

nosis on the electrocardiogram. However, if complete heart block appears suddenly and the clinical picture is suggestive, the diagnosis of occlusion

should be suspected. An acute coronary occlusion may also usher in a paroxysm of ventricular tachycardia (Fig. 245).

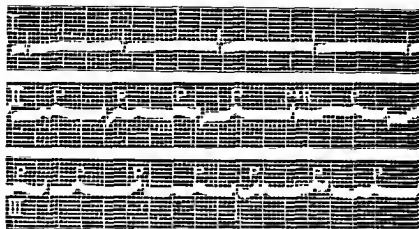


FIG. 244. Electrocardiogram made a few hours after the onset of attack of chest pain. Note presence of complete heart block. The patient had a series of typical Adams-Stokes seizures and died six hours after this tracing was recorded.

### ELECTROCARDIOGRAPHIC ALTERATIONS FOLLOWING DIGITALIS

As we would expect, the electrocardiogram shows marked changes following the administration of digitalis. Often these are characteristic of the action of the drug, although at times they cannot be distinguished from

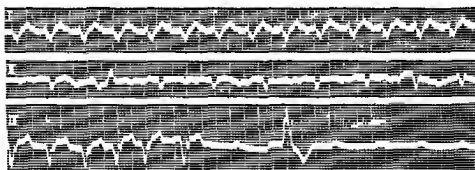


FIG. 245. Paroxysmal ventricular tachycardia following onset of initial attack of coronary thrombosis in an Irish janitor of 51. Hypertension present for 10 years. The patient died in the receiving ward while this tracing was being recorded.

the effects produced by cardiac disease. The alterations produced by digitalis in the electrocardiogram are helpful to the physician in directing therapy and may prove of great benefit to patients, since electrocardio-



graphic changes may serve as warnings of the approach of toxic action. Death from overdosage of digitalis is not unknown, consequently any laboratory aid in checking the effect of the administration of this drug is an advantage.

**P and T-Waves.** Digitalis affects the heart rate and rhythm. It may alter the shape of the P and T-waves of the electrocardiogram. When the influence of the vagus predominates in the early stages of digitalis action, slowing of the heart may be present. In toxic amounts digitalis may speed the heart with the production of paroxysms of ventricular tachycardia.

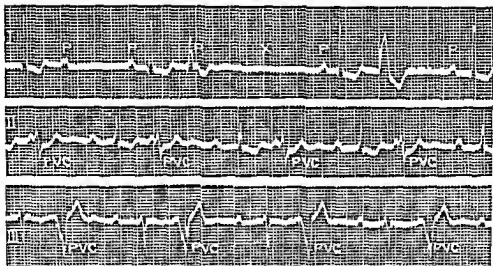


FIG. 246. Electrocardiogram of a patient suffering from rheumatic heart disease, mitral and aortic stenosis. Eighteen grains of the whole leaf of digitalis were administered over the course of the week before above tracing was made. Note premature ventricular contractions following normal beats, the prolongation of the P-R Intervals and the dropped beat at "x"

A-V dissociation may be produced by digitalis with slowing of the heart (Fig. 246). This is caused by vagal action and is a toxic manifestation. Both flutter and fibrillation have been reported following massive doses of digitalis. A-V nodal rhythm may also appear (see Fig. 197).

Varying degrees of heart block may be induced by digitalis when fibrillation of the auricles is present. Here digitalis registers its most dramatic effects, acting almost as a specific remedy in patients with high ventricular rates (Fig. 247).

**Premature Beats.** Digitalis frequently produces premature beats in diseased hearts. Bigeminal rhythm is a characteristic sign of the toxic action of digitalis (Fig. 248). Isolated premature beats should also be considered in the category of warning signs when digitalis is being administered. When these are observed, if the drug is not properly regulated, serious paroxysms of ventricular tachycardia may appear. However, it must

be kept in mind that the presence of premature contractions alone is not a contraindication to digitalis therapy. Many times following successful digitalization this arrhythmia entirely disappears.

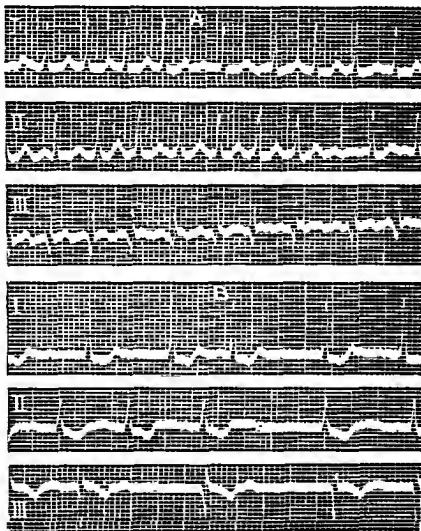


FIG. 247. Two three-lead electrocardiograms illustrating the effect of digitalis in a patient suffering from rheumatic heart disease and auricular fibrillation. A. Before digitalis. Ventricular rate 170. B. Same patient three days later following the administration of 1.3 grams ( $19\frac{1}{2}$  grains) of whole leaf of digitalis. Note the slowing of the ventricular rate in B (82) and depression of the S-T intervals in all leads. There was striking clinical improvement.

Vagal action is probably responsible for the alteration in the P-wave of the electrocardiogram that occurs following toxic doses of digitalis. These

changes are encountered most frequently in lead 3 and include all the alterations in the P-waves shown in Fig. 179. They are, however, of little clinical significance.

**T-Wave.** The greatest influence of digitalis is upon the T-wave of the electrocardiogram. If Figs. 247 and 248 are closely inspected, the change will be seen to be brought about by a depression of the S-T segment of the tracing. This pulls the T-wave down with it, producing an appearance in the electrocardiogram that is quite typical of the action of digitalis. In

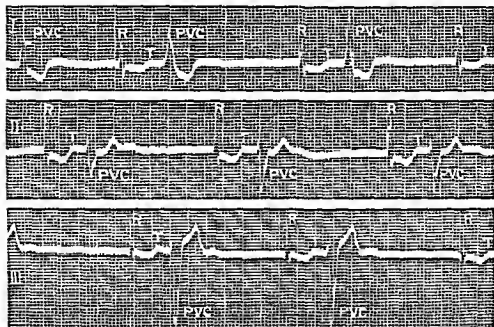


FIG. 248. Effect of overdigitalization. Pacemaker displaced to A-V node (nodal rhythm). Note the premature ventricular contraction following each nodal beat and the depressed S-T intervals.

patients with normal hearts and upright T-waves, this electrocardiographic change follows the administration of digitalis. It may also be observed in patients who have mild myocardial damage. In badly damaged hearts, however, upright T-waves may become inverted in a manner not at all characteristic. At times the inversion may resemble the coronary type of T-wave. If the T-wave is already inverted by disease, the administration of digitalis may cause it to assume an upright position (Fig. 249). Consequently interpretations of these changes may lead to false impressions unless the electrocardiographic laboratory is in possession of exact information concerning the amount of digitalis that the patient has received, and the date the administration was begun. It is likewise important to remember that the laboratory cannot always tell the stage of digitalization by an inspection of the shape of the T-wave. The change in the T-wave reaches

its height while the action of digitalis is still a therapeutic one. Continued dosage may produce toxic signs but causes no further change in the T-wave.

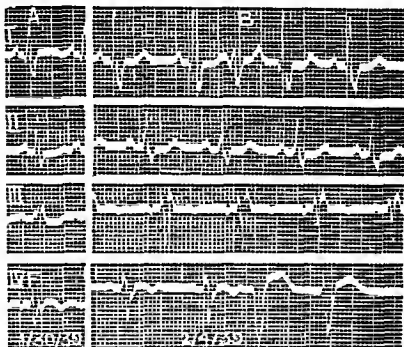


FIG. 249. Effect of digitalis on T-Wave. A. Tracing taken during an attack of congestive failure. The patient was a woman of 48 suffering from hypertensive cardiovascular disease. B. Taken after the administration of 1.5 grams (22½ grains) of the whole leaf of digitalis. Note change in  $T_1$  and  $T_2$ . In lead I of B there is an interpolated premature ventricular contraction. There is a slight widening of the QRS groups.

### ELECTROCARDIOGRAM IN CHILDREN

While the fundamentals of electrocardiography are essentially the same in adults and children, in early life some variations may be observed in the duration and amplitude of the component parts of the electrocardiogram.<sup>46, 118</sup>

**P-Wave.** The duration of the P-wave in children should not exceed 0.09 second and the height 0.07 mm. Rheumatic heart disease is the common cause of abnormal notching, increase in height and widening of the P-wave in younger patients. Congenital heart disease, particularly pulmonary stenosis, may increase the height of the P-wave, but the other alterations are rarely encountered.

**P-R Intervals.** According to Ashman,<sup>5</sup> the P-R intervals from birth through the fifth year average 0.11 to 0.12 second; from ages six to nine, 0.12 second; from 10 to 12, 0.135 second; and for ages 13 and 14, 0.14 sec-

ond. The normal P-R intervals in children range from 0.14 to 0.18 second. These variations depend on the age and the cardiac rate.

**Right axis deviation** is a common finding at birth but tends to disappear in a few months (see Fig. 188). Extreme right axis deviation is associated with congenital pulmonary stenosis, while a less marked degree of right axis deviation accompanies mitral stenosis.

**Left axis deviation** is not as common, since the major causes of this shift in the axis are not present in children. Coarctation of the aorta, aortic regurgitation and stenosis, and occasionally uncomplicated mitral regurgitation may produce left axis deviation.

The QRS complex usually measures 0.06 to 0.08 second and never exceeds 0.09 second in normal records of children. Low voltage of the QRS is rare. A  $Q_3$  wave is not abnormal in the presence of a right axis deviation.

Occasionally bundle-branch block may be encountered in healthy children. The P-R intervals in many of these cases are short (0.09 second), and paroxysms of tachycardia are often present. An accessory A-V bundle (bundle of Kent) has been offered as an explanation of this finding.

The RS-T interval may be elevated in all three leads in the presence of pericarditis in children as well as in adults. This elevation must exceed 1 mm. before it can be considered abnormal.

The T-waves in lead I are usually highest in children than in adults. The height of  $T_2$  shows little variation. However,  $T_3$  is not as high in children. Congenital malformations tend to increase the height of the T-waves.

Sinus arrhythmia is common in children and is not abnormal. Premature beats are rare but may accompany rheumatic heart disease. Sometimes they may be observed in the absence of any other evidence of cardiac abnormality. Prolongation of the P-R interval is a common finding in the presence of rheumatic carditis, although higher grades of block are rare. Complete block may be congenital (see Case 54). In diphtheria complete heart block may occur and usually points to a poor prognosis. Auricular fibrillation or flutter rarely occurs in children. When present, these arrhythmias complicate either rheumatic heart disease or cardiac failure secondary to a serious congenital defect (see Case 56).

## MISCELLANEOUS ELECTROCARDIOGRAPHIC PATTERNS

### VENTRICULAR STRAIN

In addition to the great value of electrocardiography in the diagnosis of the various cardiac arrhythmias and acute myocardial infarction, it has proved its usefulness in a variety of other conditions. For example, when either a sudden or chronic strain is placed upon either ventricle, significant alterations appear. In hypertension the T-waves in lead I or in leads I and 2 may reflect the strain placed on the left ventricle long before the appear-

ance of clinical signs of weakness or failure (Fig. 250). If the strain is relieved, the T-waves return to normal (see Fig. 121 A and B). It can also be shown by animal experimentation that a sudden right ventricular strain produced by temporarily clamping the pulmonary artery will cause a deep inversion of the T-wave in leads 2 and 3. Similar changes have been ob-

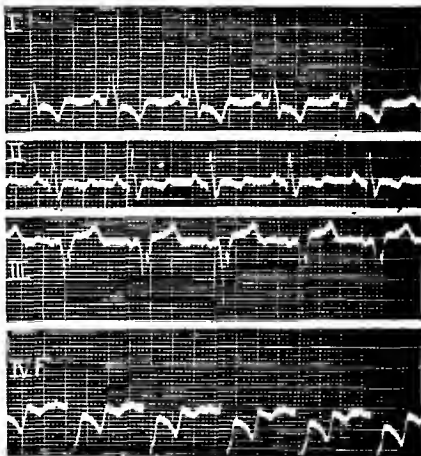


FIG. 250. Electrocardiogram taken on a woman of 62 with severe hypertension. No digitalis had been given. No history of angina or occlusion. Slight cardiac enlargement. This tracing shows depressed S-T segments in leads 1 and 4F.  $T_3$  is diphasic. It is suggestive of chronic left ventricular strain.

served in the human electrocardiogram following acute cor pulmonale (Fig. 251). Consequently in many instances the electrocardiogram may distinguish between acute pulmonary embolism and sudden coronary occlusion. Ventricular strain produced by congenital lesions may also be reflected in the T-waves of the electrocardiogram.

Often the tracings reflecting ventricular strain resemble those produced by block of one of the bundle-branches. Barnes<sup>21</sup> has suggested that this

pattern may be caused by metabolic changes produced by the excessive work placed upon the ventricular muscle. Since the presence of fatigue products lessens conductivity and modifies electrical potential, some change in the electrocardiogram would be expected.

Conditions that commonly place an extra load on the left ventricle are hypertension, aortic stenosis and aortic regurgitation. As a result of this strain, T-wave changes and left axis deviation may be observed in the absence of any disease of the coronary arteries. Occasionally in the presence of one of the conditions known to produce left ventricular strain, signs of right ventricular strain may appear. In these instances clinical evidence of mitral stenosis or pulmonary arteriosclerosis should be sought, since either of these conditions may exert an influence on the right ventricle. Consequently, when the electrocardiogram displays an unexpected alteration, the clinical evidence should be reviewed. Often a satisfactory explanation will be found.

Left ventricular strain first produces a left axis deviation. The R-wave in lead I is over 12 mm. in height, while  $S_2$  is inverted and measures 5 mm. or more below the base line. If the strain continues, the T-wave in lead I may become inverted (Fig. 250).  $T_2$  may show less marked inversion, while  $T_3$  has an opposite direction to  $T_1$ . Atypical tracings appear when other cardiac lesions such as pericarditis, acute occlusion, or mitral stenosis are present or following the administration of digitalis.

Occasionally in patients who show congestive failure secondary to hypertensive cardiovascular disease, the blood pressure figure may be normal (page 105). In these instances the typical alterations in the electrocardiogram of left ventricular strain are valuable in suggesting the previous existence of hypertension.

Acute right ventricular strain may be produced by pulmonary embolism, the degree usually varying in proportion to the size of the artery occluded. The S-wave in lead I of the electrocardiogram becomes deeper

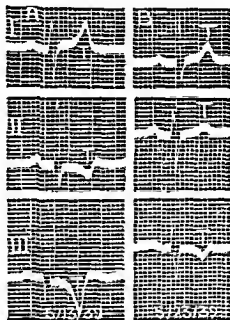


FIG. 251. The electrocardiogram in acute right ventricular strain. A was taken three hours after the sudden onset of chest pain and hemoptysis in a colored boy of 23. Note S-T wave in lead 1, the S-T take-off below the isoelectric level in leads 2 and 3 and small  $Q_2$ . B was taken a week later. Note the disappearance of the S-T wave in lead 1, upright  $T_2$  and decreased depth of  $T_3$ .  $Q_2$  has disappeared and there is a deep S-wave in lead 3. The diagnosis of pulmonary embolism was made but its site of origin remained a mystery.

(Fig. 251).  $T_2$  may be iso-electric, inverted or diphasic. If serial tracings are taken,  $T_2$  will be seen to again become upright.  $T_3$  is inverted, and a Q-wave in lead 3 usually appears. The RS-T interval in lead 3 in many instances has a cove shape resembling that commonly produced by infarction. It must be remembered that all of these changes may not appear in each case. Moreover, the occlusion of smaller branches of the pulmonary artery produces no electrocardiographic alteration, consequently it is always possible for suggestive clinical symptoms to appear without change in the electrocardiogram. Barnes<sup>20</sup> has shown that pulmonary infarction complicating the course of acute congestive failure seldom changes the electrocardiographic pattern to any extent, since the emboli in this condition are small and rarely occlude large pulmonary branches. As a rule the greater the degree of shock and circulatory embarrassment following a pulmonary embolism, the more likely it is that confirmatory evidence will appear in the electrocardiographic tracing. The changes produced by pulmonary emboli are transient and tend to disappear from the electrocardiogram as soon as the right ventricle recovers from the effect of the sudden strain. The exact cause of the production of these electrocardiographic changes is unknown. Some observers attribute them to spasm of the coronary vessels of the affected ventricle. Barnes believes that they are due to failure of a normal metabolic exchange in the muscle.

Congenital pulmonary stenosis and some diseases of the pulmonary vessels and lungs lead to failure of the right ventricle. Asthma associated with emphysema and pulmonary hypertension produces the same result. Consequently the appearance of the pattern of right ventricular strain in the electrocardiogram in many of these cases comprises valuable additional information. The typical electrocardiographic picture of this condition shows a deep S-wave in lead 1 and a tall R-wave in lead 3 (right axis deviation).  $T_1$  is upright.  $T_2$  may be positive but is more often diphasic or iso-electric, while in long standing cases, it is inverted.  $T_3$  is diphasic or inverted. These T-wave changes may be produced by digitalis, so it is important to make sure that the drug has not been administered before ascribing them to right ventricular strain.

#### PERICARDITIS

The diagnosis of pericarditis at the bedside presents many difficulties (Chapter 4). Consequently the recent recognition and description of electrocardiographic patterns characteristic of this condition have been great aids to the clinician. The correct interpretation of these tracings, however, is only possible when the facts in each case are fully considered.

The curves obtained in acute pericarditis resemble closely those produced by an area of infarction. Often both conditions may be present simultaneously, in which event the changes produced by the pericarditis are superimposed on those of the primary disease.

When fluid is present in the pericardial sac, it may exert pressure on the coronary vessels producing a myocardial ischemia that is reflected in



the T-wave changes of the electrocardiogram.<sup>180</sup> The low voltage of the waves of the tracing that is often observed may be caused by the effect of the fluid in the pericardial sac on the electrical impulses.<sup>283</sup> Other observers<sup>154, 377</sup> believe that the elevation of the RS-T segment of the electrocardiogram seen in acute pericarditis is the result of invasion of the subepicardial myocardium by the infectious process with the destruction of small areas of cardiac muscle. It is quite likely that the latter change is the essential one in the production of the characteristic pattern observed in this disease (Figs. 252, 253).

In chronic pericarditis adhesions between the heart and the surrounding structures are unimportant. When the layers of pericardium become thickened by scar tissue, particularly when subsequently reinforced by calcium depositions, the action of the heart may be seriously affected. Diastolic filling is lessened. Under these circumstances a change appears in the electrocardiogram (Fig. 254). Low voltage of the QRS groups is the usual finding, and as the condition progresses, this is often accompanied by flattening or inversion of the T-waves in all leads.

#### WOUNDS OF THE HEART

Electrocardiograms following penetrating wounds of the heart may show the presence of pericarditis produced by the incision, the escape of blood into the pericardial sac, or the infection introduced by the object causing the injury. It is possible to distinguish between the electrocardiogram showing damage to the left coronary artery and the tracing produced when pericarditis is the only abnormality present. When there is involvement of

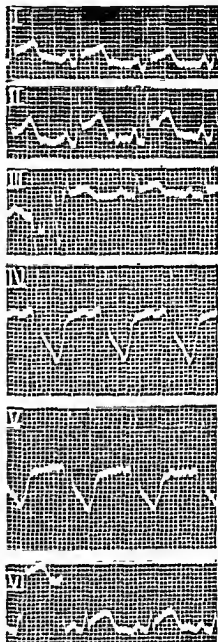


FIG. 252. The electrocardiogram in acute pericarditis. Note the elevation of the RS-T segment in all indirect leads. The direct leads in this tracing taken by the old technic. (Courtesy of Dr. Thomas McMillan.)

the left coronary artery, the RS-T segment in lead 3 is depressed, while the same interval is elevated in lead 1 (Fig. 255). When this reciprocal relationship is absent, injury to the coronary artery has usually not oc-

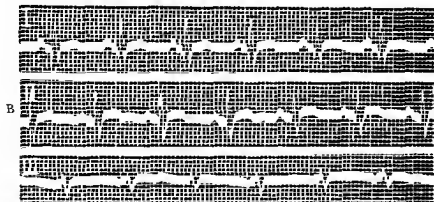


FIG. 253. Electrocardiogram of patient of 26 taken during the first week of a febrile illness diagnosed "grippe." The heart was not enlarged and there were no joint manifestations. Note slight elevation RS-T segments in all leads. The following day a friction rub appeared over the precordium.

curred. In many instances both effects combine to produce the electrocardiographic change (see Fig. 159).

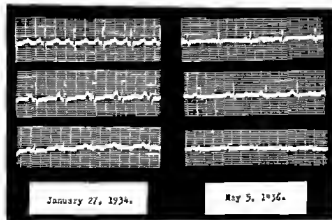


FIG. 254. Electrocardiograms taken during the course of development of chronic constrictive (calcific) pericarditis. Note change in voltage and flattening of T. See Case No. 22, page 182.

### DIABETES

The electrocardiographic pattern in diabetes is often influenced by the presence of coronary arteriosclerosis. Insulin shock associated with hypoglycemia as well as diabetic coma and acidosis produce marked changes in the form of the electrocardiogram. Flattened T-waves of severe diabetics occasionally become upright and normal when appropriate treatment is in-

stituted.<sup>94</sup> During insulin shock associated with hypoglycemia, the T-waves in all leads are decreased in height, and in some cases an increase in the A-V conduction time has been noted.<sup>269</sup>

*Diabetic coma produces a depression of the S-T interval of the electrocardiogram not unlike that observed following digitalis. However, in dia-*

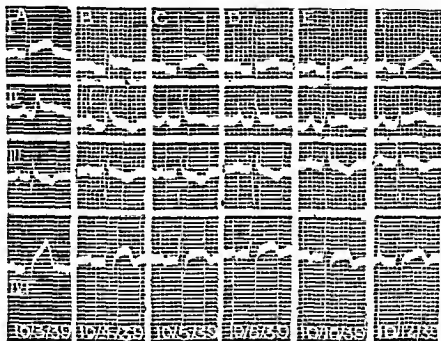


FIG. 255. Serial electrocardiograms taken following a stab wound of the left ventricle (ice pick). Note elevation of the RS-T segment in lead 1 of A and the reciprocal depression in lead 3 indicating involvement of the left coronary artery. The series of tracings extends over a 10-day period during which time rapid return to normal may be seen. Operation was not performed in this case.

betic coma the Q-T interval is prolonged, while digitalis shortens this segment. The electrocardiographic changes produced by diabetic coma are reversible. Their cause is unknown.

#### MYXEDEMA

The electrocardiogram in myxedema (see Fig. 142C) usually shows low voltage combined with flattening or inversion of the T-waves. Following treatment with thyroid gland, the amplitude of all waves may return to normal. Consequently in some cases the electrocardiogram may be of value in differentiating between the changes resulting from myxedema and those due to organic heart disease. The characteristic form of the electrocardiogram in myxedema is not produced by alterations in the skin that characterize this condition but is most likely the result of actual myocardial change.<sup>215</sup>

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# INDEX

(Bold face numbers refer to pages on which pertinent illustrations appear)

- A**
- A-V conduction defect, complicated by intraventricular or bundle-branch block in coronary occlusion, 286
- A V node, *see* Auriculo ventricular node
- Abdomen, acute surgical, differential diagnosis from aneurysm of the abdominal aorta, 484
- stimulated by aneurysm of the abdominal aorta at time of dissection prior to final rupture, case report, 483
- congestion of, caused by heart failure, 477
- examination of, in cardiac patient, 24
- pain in, as symptom of rheumatic heart disease, 124
- in lower lobe pneumonia, 173
- referred, from coronary artery disease complicated by acute coronary occlusion, case report, 478
- symptoms of, produced by circulatory disturbances, 477
- tumor of, simulated by aneurysmal dilatations of abdominal aorta, 478
- Abdominal belt, in treatment of angina pectoris, 254
- of hypotension, 435
- Acetyl beta methyleholin chloride, *see* Mechohyl
- Actinomyces* botis, as cause of subacute bacterial endocarditis, 189
- Activities, readjustment of, as important step in treatment of heart disease, illustrative case of coronary artery disease complicated by angina, 278
- Adams Stokes seizures, as cardiac emergency, treatment of, 508
- in complete heart block, complicating hypertension, case report, 404
- following coronary occlusion, 287
- complicating complete heart block, 401
- electrocardiogram in, 618, 619, 620
- taken before onset of, 621
- heart disease in, 508
- mechanism of, 508
- pre fibrillary paroxysmal tachycardia in, 383
- prevention of, by thyroid therapy, 405
- relation between respiration and circulation in, 402
- relation to emotional upsets, 402
- in senile patients, 562
- symptoms of, 508
- treatment of, 403, 508
- ephedrine in, 403
- follow up advice in, 508
- metrazol, 405
- Adhesions, constrictive, pericardial, 180
- calcium deposition in, 180
- Adrenal glands, denervation of, for neurocirculatory asthenia, successful results of, case report, 415
- Adrenalectomy, in treatment of hypertension, 310
- Adrenalin, reaction to, in beriberi, as influenced by administration of vitamin B<sub>12</sub>, 554
- significance of, in post-operative thyroid crisis, 364
- Age, as factor in cardiovascular diagnosis, 3
- Air travel, effects on patients with heart disease, 250
- Alcohol, as factor in production of hypertension, 299
- in treatment of angina pectoris, 248
- Allergy, in angina pectoris, illustrative case, 460
- in auricular fibrillation, 397, 459
- diagnosis of, principles of, 466
- in essential hypertension, 460
- in heart conditions, 454
- complications of, 468
- criteria for demonstrating allergic origin of, 456
- diagnosis, anamnesis in, 467
- drug idiosyncrasy as indication of, 456
- evidence of allergy, 466
- laboratory studies 467
- physical examination, 467
- by skin tests, 467
- by therapeutic test, 467
- treatment of, 468
- asthmatic dyspnea, 469
- drug idiosyncrasies, 468
- nasal complication, 468
- sinus infections, 469
- in paroxysmal tachycardia, 383, 388, 390
- illustrative cases, 455
- in periarteritis nodosa, 451
- reversibility of reactions of, 454
- in thromboangitis obliterans, 461
- Altitude, effects on patients with heart disease, 250
- Altitudes, flown by Commercial air lines in the United States, 251
- American Heart Association, nomenclature of diseases of heart and blood vessels, 59
- Aminophylline *see* Theophylline
- Ammonium chloride, as diuretic, 90
- synergistic effect with novasural, 90
- Amphetamine sulfate, *see* Benzedrine sulfate
- Amplification, of heart sounds, cautions in, 23
- Amyl nitrite, in treatment of angina pectoris, 247

Anemia, cardiac manifestations of, 423  
 diet in, 541  
 signs of, cardiac, 424

Anesthesia, cardiac arrest in, 474  
 prevention of, by defibrillation, 475

Anesthetic, choice of, in prevention of cardiac complications of surgery, 474  
 in pregnancy complicated by cardiac disease, 450

Aneurysm, abdominal, incidence of, 486  
 wiring of, 234

aortic, 211  
 abdominal diagnosis of, 231  
 dissecting, complicating hypertension, 322  
 pain in, 5  
 precordial pain in, 4  
 syphilitic, of transverse arch, fatal case with autopsy, 225  
 of transverse and descending arches, with unsuccessful arteriovenous anastomosis and autopsy, case report, 238  
 wiring of, 233  
 indications for, 234  
 various techniques for, 233

arteriovenous, excision of, for streptococcus viridans septicemia, 202  
 for subacute bacterial endocarditis, 192

compression of spinal cord in, 240

of descending thoracic aorta, 239

diagnosis of, 231

erosion of vertebra in, 240

large sac involving transverse and descending portions of aortic arch, 239

in old age, 560

saccular, 231

symptoms of, 231

with syphilitic aortitis, excellent results of treatment, case report, 227

in syphilitic cardiovascular disease, 210

thoracic, wiring of, 234

**Aneurysm—(Continued)**  
 of transverse and descending aortic arches, syphilitic, prognosis in, 249  
 treatment of, dietary, 232  
 for pain, 227  
 rest, 232  
 surgical, carotid jugular anastomosis, 236  
 wiring of, accidents in, 236  
 contraindications to, 234  
 equipment for, 234  
 results of, 235

Angina pectoris, 241  
 allergic, 469  
 illustrative case, 469  
 age incidence of, 243  
 chest pain in, 4  
 in child, secondary to aortic regurgitation of rheumatic origin, 255  
 complicated by diabetes mellitus, prognosis in, 288  
 in coronary artery disease, improvement following careful regulation, case report, 278  
 improvement following initial attack of thrombosis, 276  
 relieved by abdominal belt, case report, 252  
 definition of, 241  
 in diabetes mellitus, incidence of, 288  
 diagnosis of, 244  
 effects of air travel on, 249  
 electrocardiogram following exercise as diagnostic aid in, 636  
 etiology of, 241, 243  
 aortic incompetence, 244  
 syphilis, 244  
 thyroid overaction, 244  
 following traumatic injury of the heart, 490  
 heredity of, 243  
 history of, 241  
 in hyperthyroidism, 353  
 illustrative cases, 249  
 incidence of, 243  
 occupational incidence of, 243  
 prognosis of, 242, 245  
 in presence of syphilis, 245  
 in young persons, 255  
 racial incidence of, 243  
 in senile patients, management of, 562  
 sex incidence of, 243

**Angina pectoris—(Continued)**  
 treatment of, abdominal belt, 249  
 alcohol injections, 249  
 contraindications to digitalis in cases without congestion, 866  
 diet in, 246  
 with drugs, 247  
 alcohol, 248  
 amyl nitrite, 247  
 barbitol, 248  
 digitalis, contraindicated, 249  
 erythrol tetranitrate, 247  
 nitrates, 247  
 nitroglycerine tablets, 247  
 sodium nitrite, 247  
 glucose and insulin regime, 246  
 paravertebral alcohol injection of sympathetic lcs, 256  
 physiotherapy, 249  
 regimen of life, 245  
 routine medication in, 248  
 in ambulatory cases, 248  
 tobacco, 246  
 in young people, 255  
 differential diagnosis from chest pain, 255  
 prognosis of, 255

Anorexia, as symptom of overdigitalization, 79  
 in rheumatic heart disease, 123

Anoxemia, in air travel, dangers of, to cardiac patients, 250  
 cardiac action in various stages of, 475

Aorta, abdominal, aneurysm of, diagnosis of, 485  
 differential diagnosis of, 486  
 acute surgical abdomen, 484  
 dilatation of, simulating abdominal tumor, 478  
 simulating acute surgical abdomen, at time of dissection prior to final rupture, case report, 483  
 ruptured, dissection in pathways in reported cases, diagram of, 485

aneurysm of, 211  
 as cause of sudden death, 283  
 of transverse arch, symptoms of, 44

*Aorta—(Continued)*

treatment of, roentgenographic and orthodiagraphic check of results of, 44

arteriosclerotic stenosis of, sudden death in, 283

calcareous stenosis following rheumatic heart disease, 127

coarctation of, 336

adult, 336

as factor in renal hypertension, 296

infantile, 336

roentgenogram and schematic drawing of adult type, 337

types of, 336

vascular signs in, 336

dextroposition of, with complete pulmonary atresia, defect of the interventricular septum and hypertrophy of the bronchial arteries, case report with autopsy, 348

diameter of, Kreuzfeldt's method for determination of, 29, 35

dissecting aneurysm of, complicating hypertension, 322

complicating hypertension, illustrative case report, 324

diagnosis of, roentgenologic, 323

differentiation from coronary occlusion, 323

embolism, 324

in hypertension, clinical features of, 322

incidence of, 322

pathology of, 322

prognosis in, 323

symptoms of, 323

as affected by direction of dissecting column, 323

treatment of, 324

insufficiency of, as cause of angina pectoris, 244

knob of, changes in size and shape of, 37, 40

lesions of, as cardiac emergencies, 500

measurements of, in aneurysm, 44

diagnostic significance of, 44

*Aorta. measurements of—(Contd.)*

in hypertension, 44

in syphilitic aortitis, 44

percussion of, 12

quadricuspid valve of, as factor in development of subacute bacterial endocarditis, 334

stenosis of, calcific, with superimposed subacute bacterial endocarditis, 205

with superimposed subacute bacterial endocarditis case report with autopsy, 206

syphilitic regurgitation, sudden death in, 283

thoracic, aneurysm of, treatment of, 229

valve of, acute gonococcal endocarditis of, 188

in rheumatic heart disease, 126

Aortic regurgitation, cardiac silhouette in, 40

shape of heart in, 40

Aortitis, syphilitic, 221

and aneurysm, with excellent response to therapy, case report, 227

complicated by dissecting aneurysm, 323

differential diagnosis, from rheumatic heart disease, 224

sudden death in, incidence of, 283

treatment of, specific, 228

by wiring and electrolysis of aneurysms, 227

and valvulitis, with superimposed subacute bacterial endocarditis, possibility of, 207

Arrhythmia, 374

see also names of various types of arrhythmia

auricular flutter, 390

as cardiac emergency, 501

as cause of neurosis, 374

in children, sinus arrhythmia, 651

diagnosis of, 375

age relations, 375

alternation of pulse, 375

bundle branch block, 375

*Arrhythmia, diagnosis—(Contd.)*

cardiac rate as factor in, 375

importance of complete physical examination in, 376

from patient's description, 376

premature beats vs auricular fibrillation, 375

electrocardiographic demonstration of, 47

etiology of, cholelithiasis, 480

following use of sulfanilamide, 393

illustrative cases, 376

paroxysmal tachycardia, 383

perpetual, etiology of auricular fibrillation, 394

posttraumatic, 491

as precipitating factor in cardiac neurosis, 420

pulsus alternans, 407

sinus arrest, 377

sinus arrhythmia, 390

sinus bradycardia caused by hypersensitive carotid sinus, 378

sinus tachycardia, case report of, 376

skipped or dropped beat, 375

symptoms of, 376

terms used in patient's description of, 376

type of, definite description of, for diagnostic purposes, 374

Arteries, bronchial, hypertrophy of, with complete pulmonary atresia, dextroposition of the aorta and interventricular defect, case report with autopsy, 348

Arteries, coronary, diseases of, see Coronary artery disease

Arteriosclerosis, as cause of coronary artery disease, 260

complicated by intermittent claudication and diabetes mellitus, case report, 290

complicating myxedema, 372

in diabetes and myxedema as related to blood cholesterol, 373

diet in, 541

etiology of, 260



- Arteriosclerosis, local, as cause of hypersensitivity of carotid sinus, 379  
relation to diabetes mellitus, 287  
sinus arrest in, 377  
treatment of, carbon dioxide baths in, case report, 518
- Arthritis, in rheumatic heart disease, management of, 133
- Aschoff body, 120  
autopsy incidence of, 120  
in rheumatic heart disease, 119
- Aschoff cells in rheumatic heart disease, 119
- Ascites, 183  
in congestive cardiac failure, 7  
as symptom of pericarditis, 182  
treatment of, mercury diuretics, 91
- Ashoff and Tawara node, *see* Auriculo-ventricular node,
- Asthemia, neurocirculatory, 410  
in absence of cardiac symptoms, 414  
anti-anemic therapy in, 413  
in civilian life, 412  
etiology of, 412  
illustrative cases, 414  
incidence of, 412  
in war times, 412  
management of, 412  
prevention of, 414  
by efficient grading of recruits upon arrival at camp, 414  
re-examinations in, importance of frequent, 413  
signs and symptoms of, 411  
dyspnea, 411  
in soldiers, 410  
symptoms of, 411  
palpitation, dyspnea and fainting, 411  
treatment of, avoidance of drugs in, 413  
daily regimen, 413  
exercise and training in, 413  
importance of explaining exact status to patient, 412  
removal of foci of infection, 413
- Asthemia, neurocirculatory, treatment of—(Continued)  
removal of patient from front line of battle, 412  
unsuccessful medical treatment followed by relief after adrenal denervation, 415
- Asthma, allergic, as cardiac emergency, 499  
differential diagnosis from cardiac asthma, 114  
treatment of, epinephrine in, 499
- bronchial, as cardiac emergency, 499  
complicated by chronic cor pulmonale, 427  
followed by cardiac asthma and sudden left ventricular heart failure, differential diagnosis and management of patient in, 114
- cardiac, 5  
as cardiac emergency, treatment of, 505  
in chronic nephritis, 301  
complicated by congestive failure and hyper sensitivity to digitalis and morphine, case report, 107
- Asthma, cardiac, contraindication to epinephrine in, 499  
in coronary occlusion, 301  
differential diagnosis from allergic asthma, 114  
in hypertension, treatment of, 309  
with sudden left ventricular heart failure in patient with past history of bronchial asthma, diagnosis and management of patient, 114  
as symptom of hypertension, 300  
symptoms of, 505  
treatment of, 498, 505  
follow up, 499  
immediate, 498
- climatic treatment of, 470  
coexistence with heart disease, 463  
diagnosis of, 465
- Asthma, coexistence with heart disease—(Continued)  
paroxysmal pulmonary edema in, 466  
complicating heart disease, 462  
differential diagnosis from heart disease, 463  
dyspnea in, treatment of, 469  
in heart disease, diagnosis of, 466  
evidence of allergy, 466  
manifestations of cardiac, 461  
nasal complications of, treatment of, 468  
treatment of complications, 468  
incidence of, 461  
mode of action on the heart, 462  
in paroxysmal tachycardia, 458  
treatment of, with helium and oxygen, 102
- Atheroma of abdominal aorta, 269  
in senile heart, 358
- Atherosclerosis, *see* Atheroma
- Athletica, chronic enlargement of the heart in, 533  
early degenerative cardiovascular changes in, 536  
form for study of cardiovascular conditions of, recommended for schools and colleges, 537  
heart in, 531  
roentgenography of heart in exhaustion, 534  
sudden death of, not necessarily due to heart failure, 533
- Atropine sulfate, as remedy for untoward effects of mechnyl, 387
- Auricle, injections into, in prevention of cardiac arrest in anesthesia, 476  
right, metastatic tumor of, right ventricle and, from sarcoma of the knee, case report with autopsy, 432  
tumor in, 433  
septum of, absence of, congenital, 341  
with absence of membranous portion of

- interventricular septum and congenital heart block, case report with autopsy, 343
- congenital defects of, 341, 342
- entire absence, 341
- illustrative cases, 343
- patent foramen ovale, 341
- persistent ostium primum, 341
- defects of, congenital, 341
- Auricular fibrillation, *see* Fibrillation, auricular
- Auricular flutter, *see* Flutter, auricular
- Auricular nodule, spread of excitation impulse through, 582
- Auriculo-ventricular block, 400
- Auriculo-ventricular node, in conduction system, diagram of, 582
- function in conduction of cardiac impulse, 583
- Auscultation, 12
- amplified, 23
- transdigital, 16
- Austin Flint heart murmur, 21
- B**
- Bacillus coli*, as cause of acute bacterial endocarditis, 185
- influenza*, as cause of subacute bacterial endocarditis, 189
- pyocyanus*, as cause of acute bacterial endocarditis, 185
- Balneotherapy, *see* Hydrotherapy
- Barbital, effect of, on senile heart, 562
- Barbiturates, in treatment of coronary artery disease, 271
- Barium chloride, in treatment of complete heart block, 403
- Basal metabolism, in cardiac disease, 58
- depressed rate of, significance of, 58
- elevated rate of, in congestive failure, 59
- significance of, 59
- in hyperthyroidism, 355
- in relation to blood cholesterol, 371
- in thyrotoxicosis, 59
- Beck operation for coronary artery disease, 275
- Beck triad, as symptom of chronic constricting pericarditis, 181
- Bed rest, indications for, 527
- Bedstead, cardiac, 75
- Benzedrine sulfate, in treatment of complete heart block, 404
- Beri beri, 553
- cardiovascular pathology in, 554
- circulatory symptoms of, treatment of, pitresin, 554
- heart in, 553
- wet type, cardiovascular symptoms of, 553
- Biliary dyskinesia, caused by heart failure, 477
- Biliary tract, disease of, and coronary disease, with cardiac improvement following cholecystectomy, case report, 481
- Bismuth subnitrate, in treatment of hypertension, 307
- Bismuth therapy, by effects of, 216
- for cardiovascular syphilis, technique of, 215, 216
- equipment for, 216
- intramuscular, 216
- oral, 217
- site of injection, 216
- sublingual mass, 217
- stomatitis as result of, 217
- Blood, analysis of, as routine measure of diagnosis and aid, 56
- technic for preparation of specimen for, 57
- cholesterol, in diabetes and myxedema, in relation to arteriosclerosis, 373
- in myxedema, 371
- in non-toxic goiter, 371
- in relation to basal metabolism, 371
- in thyroid crisis, 371
- sedimentation rate of, *see* Erythrocytes, sedimentation rate of
- Blood pressure, age in relation to, 53
- arterial, estimation by auscultatory method, 50
- basal, determination of, 52
- daily variations of, 52
- Blood pressure—(Continued)
- determination of, by oscillometric method, 53
- standardization of methods as recommended by the American Heart Association and Cardiac Society of Great Britain and Ireland, 51
- diastolic, normal, 53
- effect of sleep on, 53
- in females, 53
- in hyperthyroidism, 355
- in leg, special sphygmomanometric cuff for, 52
- low, *see* Hypotension
- physical and physiological factors in relation to, 52
- pulmonary, as sign of hypertension, 299
- pulse, 53
- in senile patients, 562
- regulation of, 562
- systolic, normal, 53
- unequal simultaneous, as sign of cardiovascular syphilis, 213
- variations, daily, 52
- effect of respiratory factors and position on, 53
- in relation to age, 53
- venous, 54
- in cardiovascular diagnosis, 56
- determination of, 54
- apparatus for, 55
- clinical significance of, 55
- by direct method, 54
- by Hales method, 54
- by inspection of external jugular veins, 56
- normal, 54
- significance of, in cardiovascular diagnosis, 55
- Blood transfusion, of human blood, in treatment of subacute bacterial endocarditis, 193
- in treatment of subacute bacterial endocarditis, 193, 193
- Blood vessels, in rheumatic heart disease, 122
- Body types, as related to shape and position of heart, 30
- Bradycardia, etiology of, 379
- management of, 379

- Brain, in rheumatic heart disease, 123
- Brain stem, injuries of, an etiological factor in hypertension, 293
- Brucella* organisms as cause of subacute bacterial endocarditis, 189
- Bundle branch, left, diagram of, 582
- right, diagram of, 582
- Bundle branch block, diagnosis of, 375
- electrocardiogram in, 623
- electrocardiogram in, simulating ventricular strain 652
- right, electrocardiogram in, 624
- transient electrocardiogram in, 626
- Bundle of His, in conduction system 583
- diagram of, 582
- C**
- Cachexia, aneurysmal 236
- cardiac, 153, 542
- strumpicova, 370
- Caffeine, in treatment of coronary artery disease, 271
- sodium benzoate for shock in cardiac emergency of coronary occlusion, 504
- Calcium, deposition of, in constricting adhesions, 180
- dietary requirement of, 540
- fatal effects of intravenous administration in digitalized patients, 85
- in senile heart, 558
- Carbohydrate, classification of fresh vegetables and fruits according to content of, 546
- dietary requirements of, 540
- Carbon di-oxide baths, sedative effect of, 518
- in treatment of arteriosclerosis, 518
- coronary occlusion with angina, 519
- heart disease, 514
- illustrative cases, 518
- indications for, 516
- technic of, illustrative cases, 518
- Cardiac arrest, during anesthesia, 474
- intra auricular injections for, 476
- by intracardiac injections, 475
- massage of heart, 475
- prevention of, defibrillation, 475
- prevention of, drugs in, 475
- ventricular fibrillation, prevention of, 474
- Cardioscope, 581
- attachment for electrocardiograph, 580
- Cardiothoracic ratio, calculation of, 53
- Cardiovascular disease, producing acute abdominal symptoms, 477
- classification of, 477
- Carditis, as early manifestation of rheumatic heart disease, 136
- Cacotid anus, hypersensitive, causing sinus bradycardia, case report, 37
- etiology of, arteriosclerosis, 379
- sex incidence of, 379
- syncope, as cachexia emergency, 500
- treatment of, with thiamin chloride, 379
- Carotid jugular anastomosis, for aneurysm 236
- steps in, 238
- successful case of, 237
- Cellectomy, anatomic and physiologic basis for, 312-34
- bilateral, for malignant hypertension in young man, 320
- in treatment of hypertension, 311, 312
- Cerebral symptoms, as toxic manifestation of digitalis, 79
- Cesarean section for heart disease in pregnancy, 450
- Cervitamic acid, in treatment of subacute bacterial endocarditis, 194
- Chancre, as primary lesion in cardiovascular syphilis, 209
- Chest, examination of, in cardiovascular diagnosis, 9
- pain, in angina, 4
- as cardiac emergency, 496
- as cardiac symptom, 4
- in coronary disease, 4, 264
- differential diagnosis in various forms of cardiac disease, 4
- in effort syndrome, 4
- electrocardiogram taken a few hours after onset of, 646
- owing to excessive indulgence in tea and coffee, simulating coronary artery disease, 268
- precordial, 4
- related to exertion, 4
- role of premature cardiac beats in, 4
- in spontaneous hypoglycemia, 289
- transient, 4
- wounds of, involving heart, 486
- Cheyne-Stokes respiration, 6
- as cardiovascular symptom, 5
- Children, cardiac, special schools for, 530
- treatment of, social service as factor in, 565-573
- electrocardiogram in, 630
- see also Electrocardiogram
- heart disease in, see also under names of diseases
- heart hospital for, 132
- Chlorides, as diuretics, 87
- Cholecystectomy, with favorable effect on electrocardiogram, 480
- Cholelithiasis, as cause of arrhythmia, 480
- co-existent with coronary disease, 483
- complicated by cardiac symptoms, relieved by removal of stones from gallbladder or common duct, 482
- by heart disease, surgical treatment in, 483
- Chorea, in rheumatic heart disease, management of, 134
- treatment of, by fever induction, 134

- Cigarette cough vs asthma, 464
- Circulation, peripheral, failure of, *see* Circulatory failure, peripheral
- time of, as demonstration of effect of digitalis, 78
- Circulatory failure, peripheral, 511
- causes of, 71, 511
- symptoms of, 511
- treatment of, 511
- Claudication, intermittent, complicated by arteriosclerosis and diabetes mellitus, 290
- Climatotherapy, in rheumatic heart disease, 135
- Clubbing of fingers and toes, in cardiovascular diagnosis, 24
- Coeur en sabot, 43, 349
- Colds, effect of, in rheumatic heart disease, 140
- Collapse, *see* Circulatory failure, peripheral
- Color of face and lips, as factor in cardiovascular diagnosis, 6
- Committee on Cardiac Clinics of the Association for the Prevention and Relief of Heart Disease, practical guide for diagnosis of heart disease, 59
- Community resources, rendered available in treatment of heart disease, by social service workers, 572
- Conduction system, lesions of, in various types of block, diagram of, 627
- ox heart demonstration of, 584
- schematic diagram of component parts of, 582
- as shown by India ink injection of beef heart, 583
- Congenital heart disease, 328
- bicuspid aortic and pulmonary valves, 334
- clinical classification of cardiac defects, 331
- acyanotic group, 331
- cases of arteriovenous shunt with possible terminal or transient reversal of flow (cyanose tardive), 331
- cyanotic group, 331
- complications of, pulmonary tuberculosis, 330
- congestive failure as most common cause of death in, 352
- dextrocardia, 335
- etiology of, 328
- idiopathic hypertrophy, 333
- incidence of, 328
- interauricular septal defects, 341
- interventricular septal defect, 336
- patent ductus arteriosus, 338
- prognosis in, 352
- roentgenography in demonstration of, 42
- sedimentation rate of erythrocytes in, 58
- signs and symptoms of, 329
- clubbing of fingers and toes, 330
- congestive failure, 330
- cyanosis, 329
- physical, 329
- special schools for children afflicted with, 351
- with superimposed subacute bacterial endocarditis, 351
- supernumerary pulmonary cusps, 334
- symptoms of, polycythemia, 330
- treatment of, 351
- Constipation, in coronary artery disease, treatment of, 273
- Convalescents, home treatment of, 140
- social service as aid in, 570
- Convulsions, in malignant hypertension, treatment of, magnesium sulfate, 320
- Cor pulmonale, acute, as cardiac emergency, 498
- etiology of, 425
- symptoms and signs of, 425
- treatment of, 498
- chronic, 426
- diagnosis of, 427
- etiology of, 426
- prognosis in, 427
- secondary to bronchial asthma of long duration, case report, 427
- symptoms of, 426
- illustrative cases, 427
- Cor pulmonale—(Continued)
- management of, 427
- roentgenogram and electrocardiogram in case of, 428
- treatment of, *see* Cardiac emergencies
- Cor triloculare biventriculorum, 343
- Cor villosum, *see* Hairy heart
- Coronary artery disease, 259
- see also* names of individual coronary diseases
- such as Coronary occlusion, etc
- age incidence of, 262
- anatomy and pathology of, 262
- aneurysm in, 267
- with angina pectoris, postoperative cardiac problem in, 476
- referred pain simulating gastrointestinal conditions, 478
- relieved by abdominal belt, 252
- cardiac failure in, 263
- cardiac irregularities in, 263
- cause of death in, 269
- chest pain in, 4, 264
- coexistent with cholelithiasis, 483
- complicated by acute coronary occlusion, with abdominal reference of pain, 478
- angina pectoris, 277
- electrocardiogram in, 279
- with improvement after initial attack of thrombosis, case report, 276
- following careful regulation, case report, 278
- orthodiagram in, 279
- cardiomegaly, 421
- psychoneurosis, 422
- case report, 421
- diagnosis of, 263
- electrocardiogram as aid in, 267
- differential diagnosis from acute pericarditis, 268
- disproportion between auscultatory and clinical findings, 283
- etiology of, 260
- arteriosclerosis, 260
- focal infections, 261
- sypilis, 261

*Coronary artery disease—(Continued)*  
 fatal, in myxedema following roentgenotherapy of thyroid gland for myxedema, 369  
 illustrative cases, 276  
 incidence of, 260  
 including myocardial infarction, electrocardiogram in, 633  
 prognosis of, 268, 278  
 sex incidence of, 262  
 sudden death in, incidence of, 282  
 symptoms of, chest pain, 264  
   gastrointestinal, 264  
 tobacco as aggravating cause of, 268  
 treatment of, absolute physical and mental rest, 273  
   avoidance of tobacco, 275  
   of constipation, 273  
   with drugs, 270  
     barbiturates, 271  
     caffeine, 271  
     digitalis, 272  
     morphine sulfate, 272  
     nitrates, 272  
     theobromine, 271  
     theophylline, 271  
     xanthines, 270  
   general principles, 269  
   of respiratory symptoms, 274  
   spa treatment, 275  
   surgical, 275  
     Beck's operation for, 275  
     total thyroidectomy, 275  
   by transplanting tissues to heart, 275  
*Coronary occlusion, acute, complicated by complete heart block with death during an Adams-Stokes seizure, 286*  
 complications of, complete heart block with recovery and death six years later from congestive failure, case report, 284  
 intraventricular or bundle-branch block and A-V conduction defects, 286  
 followed by ventricular tachycardia, 274  
 management of, 272  
 control of pain, 272

*Coronary occlusion, acute—(Continued)*  
 symptoms and signs of, 504  
 treatment of, 504  
   glucose, 274  
   oxygen, 273  
   rest in bed, 275  
 angina pectoris in, treatment of, with carbon dioxide baths, case report, 519  
 cardiac asthma in, 301  
 as cardiac emergency, symptoms and treatment of, 504  
   treatment of, contraindication to digitalis in, 504  
     glucose, 504  
     oxygen, 504  
 diagnosis of, by rhythm of electrocardiogram, 644  
 differentiation from dissecting aneurysm of the aorta, 323  
 electrocardiogram in, 634  
   alterations in auricular complex in, 636  
   changing form of, 636  
   following induced anoxemia, 636  
   serial, 645  
   series of tracings following attack, 638  
 old anterior, indicated by electrocardiogram, 635  
 posterior, electrocardiogram in serial tracings (old direct leads), and new direct leads, 639  
   followed by transient complete heart block electrocardiogram in, 645  
 sudden death in, incidence of, 282  
 treatment of, contraindication to digitalis in cases without congestion, 86  
 unsuspected, with sudden death following rupture of left ventricle through area of infarction, 280, 281  
*Coronary sclerosis, complicating myxedema, with death following second attack of coro-*

*nary thrombosis, case report, 371*  
 in diabetes mellitus, incidence of, 288  
 followed by acute coronary occlusion, diagnosed as gallbladder disease, case report, 479  
 in hyperthyroidism, 353  
 Coronary thrombosis, 259, 265  
 in cardiovascular syphilis, 275  
 death following second attack in myxedema complicated by coronary arteriosclerosis, 371  
 in diabetes mellitus, management of patient in, 290  
 Cough, as cardiac symptom, 6  
 cigarette, vs asthma, 464  
 Cretinism, sporadic, *see* thyrotoxicosis  
 Cyanosis, cyanose tardive, 331  
 etiology of, 7  
 as factor in cardiovascular diagnosis, 7

## D

Dead string, in electrocardiography, 603  
 Deafness, as result of quinidine therapy, 385  
 Death, sudden, cardiovascular lesions responsible for, 283  
   in coronary artery disease, 282  
   extracardiac lesions responsible for, 284  
 Defibrillation, in prevention of cardiac arrest in anesthesia, 475  
 Deficiency diseases, heart in, 552  
   in beriberi, 533  
   in rickets and scurvy, 557  
 Deostocardia, congenital, diagnosis of, 335  
   electrocardiogram in, 600  
 Diabetes mellitus, angina pectoris in, incidence of, 248  
   prognosis of, 288  
 arteriosclerosis in, pathogenesis of, 283  
 cardiac complications of, management of, 287  
 complicated by arteriosclerosis with angina and intermittent claud-

- cation, case report, 290  
 and intermittent claudication, orthodiagram and electrocardiogram in, 291  
 congestive heart failure in, 290  
 coronary artery disease in, in elderly patients, treatment of, 289  
 coronary sclerosis in, incidence of, 288  
 coronary thrombosis in, management of patient in, 290  
 electrocardiogram in, 656  
 hypertension in, 288  
 in relation to arteriosclerosis, 287  
 Diagnosis, according to nomenclature of American Heart Association, 60  
 anatomic, 61  
   of aorta and pulmonary arteries, 61  
   coronary arteries, 61  
   endocardium and valves, 61  
   myocardium including conduction system and heart as a whole, 61  
 etiologic, 60  
 physiologic, 62  
   cardiac mechanism, 62  
 cardiovascular, Roentgen methods in, 25  
 definition of, as related to cardiac disease, 60  
 examination of patient in, 6  
 history taking, 2  
 Diarrhea, as toxic manifestation of digitalis, 79  
 Diet, adequate, composition of, 539  
   in anemia, 541  
   in arteriosclerosis, 541  
   in cardiovascular syphilis, 546  
   in congestive heart failure, 548  
   in diabetes, 542  
     as factor in etiology of arteriosclerosis in diabetes mellitus patient, 288  
   in heart disease, 539  
   in hypertension, 543  
   in obesity, 544  
 Diet—(Continued)  
   restriction of, simple qualitative, foods allowed, 545  
   foods to avoid, 545  
   in rheumatic heart disease, 135, 545  
 Digitalis, 76  
   *see also* Foxglove  
   action of, 76  
   administration of, intra muscular, 84  
   intravenous, 84  
   strophanthin, 84  
   oral, 84  
   rectal, 84  
   allergic effect of, 81  
   contraindications for, 86  
     in acute coronary occlusion, 504  
     in diphtheria, 86  
     with ether or chloroform, 86  
     in neurocirculatory asthenia, 413  
     in pre- and postoperative conditions, 86  
     in ventricular paroxysmal tachycardia, 506  
   dangers of administering ephedrine to digitalized patients, 86  
   large doses of calcium to digitalized patients, 86  
   dosage of, 82  
     adequate, 83  
     in ambulatory patients, 83  
     in children, 83  
     instruction of patient in, 83  
     maintenance dose, 83  
     individual adjustment of, 83  
     maximum therapeutic dose, 83  
   effect of, on A V conduction, 78  
     on auricular flutter, as demonstrated in electrocardiogram, 630  
     upon cardiac output in health and disease, 78  
     upon circulatory rate, tests for demonstration of, 78  
   on electrocardiogram, on T-wave, 649  
   mechanism of, 78  
   peripheral, 77  
 Digitalis, effect of—(Continued)  
   upon sino-auricular node, 81  
   upon size of heart, 77  
   upon the stomach, 79  
   upon systolic blood pressure, 78  
   tonic, 84  
   toxic, late, 77  
   undesirable, 79  
   vagal, 77  
   upon vomiting center, 79  
   electrocardiographic changes following administration of, 646  
   hypersensitivity to, 81  
     in patient with hypertension complicated by congestive failure, cardiac asthma, and hypersensitivity to morphine, case report, 107  
   improvement of circulatory rate following administration of, 78  
   indications for, 84  
   overdigitalization, effect on electrocardiogram, 649  
   pharmaceutical preparations of, 81  
     ouabain, 85  
     stability of, 86  
     strophanthin, 84  
   poor tolerance for, in myxedema, 369  
   in pre-operative treatment of hyperthyroidism, 357  
   toxicity of, 79  
     cardiac manifestations of, 81  
     symptoms of, 79  
   in treatment of auricular flutter, 392  
   of coronary artery disease, 272  
 Digitalization, *see also* Digitalis, toxicity of  
   in treatment of cardiac failure in hypertension, 309  
 Dimethyl xanthine *see* Theophylline  
 Diphtheria, cardiac manifestations in, 438  
   prevention of, 438  
   treatment of, 438  
   contraindications to digitalis in, 86

- Diuretics, 87**  
 ammonium chloride, 90  
 in form of suppositories, 89  
 inorganic salts, 87  
 mercurial, mode of action of, 88  
 contraindications, 91  
 indications for, 91  
 organic, 88  
 precautions in administration of, 91  
 in prescription for older patients, 90  
 technic of administration of, 89  
 untoward effects of, 90  
 treatment for, 90  
 xanthines, 87
- Ductus arteriosus patent, 338**  
 direction of flow in, 338  
 etiology of, 338  
 incidence of subacute bacterial endocarditis in, 206  
 murmur in, 20  
 operative exposure of, schematic drawing of, 339  
 prognosis in, 338  
 roentgenogram and schematic drawing of, 338  
 surgical treatment of, indications for, 340
- Durozier murmur, elicitation of, 17**
- Dyspnea, asthmatic, treatment of, 469**  
 from allergic viewpoint, 469  
 anesthetic, 470  
 antipyrin and acetanilide, 469  
 epinephrine, 469  
 iodides, 469  
 oxygen, 470  
 as cardiac emergency, 498  
 careful follow-up treatment of, 499  
 treatment of, immediate, 498  
 causes of, 5  
 paroxysmal, *see* Asthma, cardiac  
 prognostic significance of, 5  
 in rheumatic heart disease, 124  
 in status asthmaticus, treatment of, 469  
 treatment of, mercury diuretics in, 91
- Dyspnea, treatment of—(Cont'd)**  
 non-specific protein shock, 469  
 venesection, 470  
 types of, in heart disease, 5
- E**
- Edema, as cardiac symptom, 7**  
 etiology of, 8  
 cardiac, treatment of, mercury diuretics in, 91  
 in congestive heart failure in diabetes mellitus, treatment of, 290  
 pitting type of, in congestive cardiac failure, 7  
 pulmonary, in cardiac asthma, 301  
 paroxysmal, in asthmatic with severe cardiac disease, 466  
 treatment of, by Southey's tubes, 97
- Effort syndrome, *see* Asthenia, neurocirculatory**  
 chest pain in, 4  
 or soldier's heart, 410
- Einthoven's triangle, 597**
- Electricity, animal, experimental work on, 574**
- Electrocardiogram, *see also* names of diseases, and illustrative cases**  
 in angina pectoris, 48  
 in arrhythmia, 47  
 artefacts in, etiology of, 587  
 mental reactions of patient, 588  
 in assessment of surgical risk, 473  
 A V nodal rhythm, 607  
 axis deviation, left, in children, 631  
 right, at birth, 631  
 in children, 631  
 before and after cholecystectomy, 482  
 in cardiac infection, 43  
 in children, 630  
 P wave, 630  
 PR intervals, 649  
 RS-T interval, 651  
 sinus arrhythmia, 561  
 T wave, 651  
 conditions placing extra load on left ventricle, 633  
 in diabetes, 636  
 effect of bilateral extreme hypertrophy of the heart upon, 600  
 of digitals on, overdigitalization, 649
- Electrocardiogram, effect—(Continued)**  
 of drugs on, 49  
 of transverse position of heart upon, diagram of, 598  
 of vagal action upon, 606  
 electrical axis of, and its deviation, 597  
 as caused by outside influences, 600  
 left deviation, 597, 598  
 right deviation, 597, 598  
 in essential hypertension, 43  
 extrasystoles in, 608  
 form to be filled out for correct interpretation of, 601  
 in hyperthyroidism, 355  
 leads, precordial, 633  
 miscellaneous patterns, 631  
 in myocardial disease, 47  
 normal conduction time in adult vs. child, 169  
 normal 6-lead, taken by old technic, 637  
 in old persons, 560  
 in paroxysmal rapid heart rates, 48  
 paroxysmal tachycardia in, 612  
 in pericarditis, 633  
 precordial leads, 637  
 in pregnancy, 444  
 premature auricular contractions, 608, 609  
 premature ventricular contractions in, 610, 611  
 reading of, 601  
 in connection with detailed clinical data, 601  
 method of procedure in, 601  
 relation to spread of excitation impulse for contraction, diagram of, 584  
 with simultaneous sound tracing, 584  
 single lead, 586  
 technical faults of, 587  
 in valvular lesions, 49  
 variations produced by differences in string tension, 588  
 movements of patient, 588  
 ventricular escape in, 606  
 ventricular strain, 631  
 left, 633  
 right, 633  
 in vitamin B<sub>1</sub>-deficiency, 533  
 wandering pacemaker, 607

- Electrocardiogram—(Continued)**  
 waves of, 584  
   alterations in notching, 594  
   P-wave changes, 591  
   P-R interval, 591  
   QRS complex, changes in, 592  
   significance of, 591  
 "f", or fibrillation waves, 632  
 manner of inscription of, 584  
 naming of, 584  
 P wave, 589  
 P R (P Q) interval, 590  
 Q wave, changes in, 595  
 QRS group, duration of, 594  
   or ventricular complexes, 590  
   variations of, 594  
 Q T interval, 591  
   changes in, 595  
 RS T interval, 591  
   changes in, 595  
 T wave, 590  
   changes in, 594  
   inversion of, by mecholy, 597
- Electrocardiograph, cardioscope,** 580  
 modern mobile type, 579  
 principles of, 577  
 recording mechanism of various types of, 580  
 string galvanometer type, 579  
 vacuum tube type, principles of, diagram of, 581
- Electrocardiography, 47, 574**  
 additional precordial leads, manner of obtaining, 586  
 apparatus for, 577  
 bed side tracing, 580  
 dead string in, 605  
 electrodes, for direct and in direct leads, 585  
   in position, 585  
 history of, 574  
   early experimental work in electrophysiology, 574  
 leads for, experimental combination of, 640  
   lead I, manner of obtaining, 586  
   lead II, manner of obtaining, 586  
   lead III, manner of obtaining, 586  
   lead IV, 638  
   precordial, 637
- Electrocardiography, leads for—(Continued)**  
   value of direct leads, 643, 644  
   management of patient during, 588  
   physiological principles of, 583  
   position of patient in, 589  
   preparation of skin for contact with electrodes, 586  
   rooms for, 588
- Electrophysiology, early experimental work in, 574**
- Electrotherapy, in heart disease,** 522
- Embolism, caused by heart failure, producing abdominal symptoms,** 478  
 cerebral, as cause of death in rheumatic heart disease, 150  
 differentiation from dissecting aneurysm of the aorta, 524  
 mechanism of, 509  
 multiple episodes of, in subacute bacterial endocarditis, case report with autopsy, 197  
 preventive measures, 509  
 pulmonary, influencing course of rheumatic heart disease with mitral stenosis and congestive failure, 144  
   in rheumatic heart disease with auricular fibrillation and dyspnea, 152  
 as sign of acute bacterial endocarditis, 186  
   subacute bacterial endocarditis, 191  
   symptoms of, 509  
   treatment of, 509
- Emergencies, cardiac, 496**  
 abnormal rhythms, 501  
 Adams Stokes seizures, 508  
 allergic asthma, 499  
 aortic lesions, 500  
 auricular fibrillation, 507  
 auricular flutter, 507  
 backward heart failure, 502  
 bronchial asthma, 499  
 cardiac asthma, 505  
 cardiac resuscitation in, 502
- Emergencies, cardiac—(Contd.)**  
 carotid sinus syncope, 500  
 chest pain, 496  
   in acute, pericarditis, 498  
   in coronary occlusion, 496  
   in pulmonary embolism, 497  
 coronary occlusion, 504  
 dyspnea, 498  
 embolism, 509  
 emotional syncope, 500  
 extracardiac factors producing syncope, 500  
 heart failure, 505  
 high vagal tone, 500  
 palpitation, 501  
 paroxysmal tachycardia, 499, 505  
 pericardial effusion, 502, 510  
 peripheral circulatory failure, 511  
 syncope, 497  
 thrombosis, 501  
 wounds and injuries of the heart, 502, 510
- Emphysema, in asthma, 463**  
 diagnosis of, 463
- Encephalopathy, in malignant hypertension, treatment of, magnesium sulfate, 320**  
 spinal puncture, 320
- Endarteritis, obliterative, in syphilitic cardiovascular disease, 209**
- Endocarditis, bacterial, acute, 185**  
 bacteriology of, 185  
 blood in, 187  
 electrocardiographic findings in, 187  
 embolism in, 186  
 etiology of, 185  
 gonococcal, complicating puerperium, with autopsy findings, case report, 187  
 treatment of, hyperthermia, 189  
   hysterectomy, 189  
   sulfanilamide, 189  
 illustrative cases of, 187  
 pathology of, 185  
 prognosis in, 187  
 signs and symptoms of, 186  
 urine in, 187  
 vegetations in, 186



Endocarditis, bacterial, acute—  
(Continued)  
diagnosis of, importance of routine blood cultures in, 57  
subacute, 189, 196  
bacteriology of, 189  
clubbing of fingers and toes in, 130  
complicated by rheumatic heart disease, treatment with hyperthermia, transfusion, sulfanilamide, heparin, sulfapyridine and excision of arteriovenous aneurysm, 192  
complicating rheumatic heart disease, 129  
developing after rheumatic heart disease, 142  
etiology of, 189  
heart failure in, 191  
illustrative cases, 192  
incidence of, 190  
with insidious onset and of long duration, with autopsy findings, case report, 194  
kidney in, 191  
management of patient in, 192  
with multiple embolic episodes, case report with autopsy, 197  
in patent ductus arteriosus, incidence of, 206  
pathology of, 190  
petechiae on abdomen, 186  
prognosis in, 191  
recurrence after disappearance of streptococcus viridans from blood stream, 204  
with rheumatic heart disease, case report, 192  
signs and symptoms of, 190  
emboli, 191  
heart murmurs in, 191  
splenic infarct in, 201  
superimposed upon calcific aortic stenosis, 205  
case report with autopsy, 206

Endocarditis, bacterial, subacute  
—(Continued)  
superimposed on congenital heart disease, 351  
on syphilitic aortitis and valvulitis, possibility of, 207  
treatment of, with blood transfusion of immunized blood, 193  
with cevistic acid, 194  
heparin sulfapyridine, 200  
with immunized horse serum, 193  
sulfanilamide, results of, 198  
sulfapyridine, 199  
thiamin chloride, 194  
rheumatic, treatment of, illustrative case, 112  
Enterococcus, as cause of subacute bacterial endocarditis, 189  
Eosinophilia, as sign of allergic effect of digitals, 81  
Ephedrine, administration of atropine to prevent reflex vagus stimulation and hypertension following, 403  
Epicardium, tumor nodules in, 408  
Epinephrine, cautious use in surgical cases, 474  
hydrochloride, harmful effect in ventricular tachycardia of pre fibrillary type and in ventricular fibrillation, 403  
in treatment of Adams-Stokes seizures, 403  
Erythrocytes, sedimentation rate of, 57  
in congenital heart disease, 58  
in congestive cardiac failure, 58  
as gauge of condition in rheumatic heart disease, 130  
as guide in treatment of cardiac disease, 57  
in rheumatic carditis, 57  
in syphilitic heart disease, 58  
Erythrol tetrantrate, in treatment of angina pectoris, 247

Esidrone, composition of, 92  
Euphyllin, *see* Theophylline  
Ewart's sign in acute pericarditis, 164  
Examination of patient, abdomen, 24  
auscultation, 12  
for cardiovascular diagnosis, 6  
type of breathing, 6  
extremities, 24  
inspection, 9  
lungs, 24  
percussion, 11  
Exercise, for ambulatory patients, planning of, 529  
apparatus for, 525  
blood changes in, 526  
combined with dietary restrictions for obesity, 528  
food as source of energy for, 526  
graded, for building reserve, 527  
in heart disease, 526  
prescription of, 526  
in training of athletes, 527  
of cardiac child, 530  
walking, 528  
*see also* Games; Gymnastics  
Extrasystoles, 380  
in absence of other signs of heart disease, case report, 382  
allergy in, 459  
auricular, 381  
in cardiac neurosis following trauma, 381  
definition of, 380  
electrocardiogram in, 608  
etiology of, allergic, 459  
in hypertension, 382  
illustrative cases, 381  
multiple, in posttraumatic cardiac neurosis, case report illustrating significance of, 381  
origin of, 381  
significance of occasional occurrence of, 380  
ventricular, in hypertensive heart disease, 382  
Extremities, blood pressure of, determination of 54  
examination of, in cardiac patient, 24  
Eyes, inspection of, for diagnosis of cardiac disease, 9

## I

Face, color of, as factor in cardiovascular diagnosis, 6

Faintness, as cardiovascular symptom, 6

Fallot tetralogy, 347  
 combination of defects in, 347  
 differential diagnosis from complete pulmonary stenosis, 350  
 schematic drawing of, 347  
 signs of, 347

Fats, dietary requirements of, 540

Fever, low grade, continuous, importance of repeated blood cultures in, 57  
 as sign of invasion of heart in rheumatic fever, 124

Fever therapy in acute gonococcal endocarditis, 189  
 in chorea of rheumatic heart disease, 134  
 in subacute bacterial endocarditis, 192  
 in treatment of heart disease, 523

Fibrillation, auricular, 394  
 adrenal factor in, 397  
 allergy in, 397  
 illustrative case, 459  
 as cardiac emergency, treatment of, 507  
 as cause of perpetual arrhythmia, 394  
 in child with congenital heart defects, 350  
 complicating rheumatic heart disease with congestive failure, 395  
 as complication of rheumatic heart disease with pulmonary emboli and dyspnea, 152  
 electrocardiogram in, 631, 632  
 illustrative cases, 395  
 incidence of, 396  
 inciting factors in, 397  
 instability of nervous system in, 397  
 paroxysmal, of allergic origin, illustrative case report, 459

Fibrillation, auricular, paroxysmal—(Continued)  
 etiology of, hyperthyroidism, 397  
 in pregnancy, 449  
 vs premature beats, diagnosis of, 375  
 in tense heart, causing congestive failure, 398  
 in thyrotoxicosis, incidence of, 357  
 treatment of, quinidine, 357  
 following toxic states and infectious disease, 398  
 traumatic, 494  
 treatment of, 398, 399, 507  
 quinidine, 398  
 in young people, 394  
 ventricular, in cardiac arrest in anesthesia, prevention of, 474  
 electrocardiogram in 615  
 harmful effects of epinephrine hydrochloride in, 403

Fingers, and toes, clubbing of, in congenital heart disease, 330  
 in other conditions, 330

Fluids, restriction of, congestive heart failure, 548

Fluoroscope, with orthodiagraphic attachment, 27

Fluoroscopy, in aortic regurgitation, 40  
 in cardiovascular diagnosis, 25  
 in combined mitral and aortic lesions, 40  
 in hypertension, 44  
 ingestion of barium paste as and in, 28  
 in mitral stenosis, 37  
 negative findings in serious heart disease, 46  
 standard positions for, 23  
 anteroposterior position, 23  
 lateral position, 33  
 left anterior oblique position, 33  
 right anterior oblique position, 32  
 study of heart action as a whole during, 46  
 in tricuspid lesions, 40

Flutter, auricular, 390  
 complicating rheumatic heart disease, case report, 393  
 course of, diagram of 528  
 electrocardiogram in, 392, 626, 628  
 illustrating effect of digitalis, 630  
 showing ventricular responses, 629  
 incidence of, 391  
 paroxysmal, complicating thyrotoxicosis relieved by subtotal thyroidectomy, 360  
 in otherwise normal heart, case report, 391  
 traumatic, 494  
 treatment of, 392  
 digitalis in 392  
 quinidine, 393  
 ventricular rate in, 631

Food, as source of energy for exercise, 526

Food allergy, in extrasystoles, 459  
 as cause of paroxysmal tachycardia 388, 390, 458

Foramen ovale, patent, 341  
 illustrative case with atopsy, 341  
 with pulmonary stenosis case report with atopsy, 346

Foxglove, William Withering's account of, facsimile, 80

Fruits, classification of, according to carbohydrate content, 546

## G

Gallbladder, disease of, differential diagnosis from heart disease, 480  
 relation to cardiac disease, 479  
 simulated by coronary sclerosis followed by acute coronary occlusion, case report, 479  
 reflex pathways to heart, 480  
 stimulation of, leading to heart block, 481

Gallap, 15  
 in hypertension without auricular fibrillation 303

Gall stones, *see* Cholelithiasis

- Games, competitive, contraindicated in heart disease, 529
- Gastrointestinal symptoms, in cardiac disease, 6
- of heart failure, 477
- as manifestation of toxic effect of quinidine, 384
- von Gierke's disease, 333
- Glandular extracts, in treatment of hypertension at menopause, 308
- Glucose and insulin diet in angina pectoris, 246
- Glycogen, storage in heart, 333
- Goiter, exophthalmic fatal postoperative crisis, case report with autopsy, 363
- treatment of subtotal thyroidectomy, followed by hypothyroidism, 362
- toxic *see* Goiter, exophthalmic
- Gonococcus, as cause of acute bacterial endocarditis, 183
- Gout, in relation to hypertension, 296
- Grafts, in treatment of coronary artery disease, 275
- Graham Steell heart murmur, 21
- Grippe, electrocardiogram taken during first week of, 656
- Growing pains, *see* Pain
- Gumma, of heart, incidence of, 211
- Guy's pills, as diuretics, 88
- Gymnastics contraindicated in heart disease, 530
- violent, ill effects of, 531

## H

- Hairy heart, 163
- see also* Pericarditis, acute fibrinous
- Hay Fever in paroxysmal tachycardia, 458
- Headache, in malignant hypertension, treatment of, venesection, 319
- Heart, action of, fluoroscopic study of, 46
- in various stages of anoxemia, 475
- in anemia, 423
- management of, 425
- tiger motting, 424

## Heart—(Continued)

- in asthma, 461
- athletic, 532
- in beri beri, 553
- compression of, acute, diastolic triad for, 491
- and cardiac failure in metastatic tumor of the heart, case report, 430
- conduction system, *see* Conduction system
- contractions of, premature, *see* Extrasystoles
- in diphtheria, 438
- dysfunction of, etiology of, 63
- effect of asthma on, 462
- fever vs toxins on, 436
- in deficiency diseases, 552
- effect of vitamin B<sub>1</sub> deficiency, 553
- degeneration of, early, in athletes, 536
- dilatation of, acute, in athletes, 533
- effect of vitamin B<sub>1</sub> deficiency on, 554
- enlargement of, *see* Heart, size and shape of, and Hypertrophy, cardiac.
- examination of, in old persons, 559
- in focal infections, 440
- function of, ordinary physical activity, 64
- disturbances of, post traumatic, 490
- response to effort, 64
- in hypertension, 301
- in hyperthyroidism, 360
- in infections, 436
- in influenza, 439
- intracardiac injections into, in prevention of cardiac arrest in anesthesia, 475
- irritable, 410
- massage of, in prevention of cardiac arrest in anesthesia, 473
- nerves of, extrinsic, diagram of, 604
- sympathetic, diagram of, 257
- in pneumonia, 439
- position of effect of respiration on, 28
- with relation to bodily types, 30
- in pregnancy, 442
- change in position of, 443
- change in size of, 443

## Heart, in pregnancy—(Continued)

- examination of, 443
- murmurs of, 444
- reflex pathways from gall bladder, 480
- reserve powers of, adjustment of work to level of, 285
- in rickets, 557
- roentgenography of, in exhausted athletes, 534
- rupture of, spontaneous, 532
- traumatic, 490
- in scarlet fever, 438
- in acurvy, 557
- semile, 558
- angina pectoris in, 562
- atherosclerosis or atheroma in, 558
- blood pressure in, 562
- calcium in, 558
- congestive failure produced by attack of auricular fibrillation in, 398
- electrocardiogram in, 560
- examination of, 559
- heart block in, 562
- symptoms of, 559
- treatment of, 560
- daily regimen, 561
- drugs in, 561
- digitalis, 561
- glucose, 561
- morphine, 551
- sedatives, 562
- shape of, alterations in, 28-47
- in aortic regurgitation, 40
- in mitral stenosis, 37
- triangular, 40
- size of, 33
- alterations in, 27-47
- in aortic regurgitation, 40
- determination of, 33
- in mitral stenosis, 39
- standstill of, in anesthesia, prevention of, 474
- stoppage of, *see* Cardiac arrest
- surgery of, tissue transplantation for coronary artery disease, 275
- three-chambered, 343
- in thyroid disease, 553
- topography of, in anteroposterior position, and right oblique position, 31
- in left anterior oblique position and lateral position, 32
- in tuberculous, 440

*Heart,--(Continued)*

- tumors of, *see also* Tumors, cardiac
  - metastatic, causing heart block, case report with autopsy, 407
  - from sarcoma of knee, 432
  - nodules in epicardium, 408
  - in right ventricle, 408
  - wounds and injuries of, 485, 510
  - as cardiac emergencies 502
  - cardiac records in, importance of, 487
  - in chest wounds, 486
  - electrocardiogram in, 655
  - following stab wound of left ventricle, 657
  - followed by arrhythmia, 491
  - by congestive failure, 490
  - by heart block, 494
  - illustrative case, 494
  - non penetrating, 489
  - symptoms of, 490
  - immediate onset, 490
  - late onset, 490
  - penetrating, 488
  - penetration of myocardium in, 489
  - prognosis in, 489
  - symptoms of, 488
  - post traumatic angina, 490
  - post traumatic functional disturbances, 490
  - relation to pre existing disease, 487
  - rupture of the heart, 489
  - signs of, 510
  - treatment of, 510
- Heart block, 399
  - vs Adams Stokes seizures, 407
  - caused by stimulation of the gallbladder, 431
  - complete, in acute coronary occlusion with death during Adams Stokes seizure, 286
  - with Adams Stokes seizures, complicating hypertensive cardiovascular disease, case report, 404
  - complicated by Adams Stokes seizure, case report, 401
  - electrocardiogram in, 617
  - due to tumor metastasis, case report with autopsy, 407

*Heart block--(Continued)*

- treatment of, barium chloride in, 405
- benzedrine sulfate, 404
- ephedrine, followed by atropine, 403
- metrazol, 405
- congenital with complete absence of interauricular septum and of membranous portion of interventricular septum case report with autopsy, 343
- diagnosis of, 344
- in older children, 346
- roentgenogram taken 4 hours before death, 344
- in coronary artery occlusion with recovery and death 6 years later from congestive failure, 284
- diagnosis of, 400
- disproportion between anatomic and clinical findings, 400
- electrocardiogram in, 399, 615, 616
- etiology of 400
- gumma, 400
- metastatic cardiac tumor invading septum, 407
- first stage, electrocardiogram of with prolongation of P R intervals, 593
- in rheumatic fever, case report, 401
- incomplete, electrocardiogram in, 616
- intraventricular, electrocardiogram in, 625
- oc bundle branch, complicating A V conduction defect in coronary occlusion, 286
- mechanism of, 399
- partial, with Adams Stokes attacks, contraindication for digitalis in, 86
- in rheumatic fever, importance of vagal release in, 404
- in senile patients, 562
- traumatic, 494
- treatment of, with ephedrine, 403
- various types of, and site of lesion in conduction system in each type, diagram of, 627

- Heart disease, in Adams Stokes seizures, 508
- of allergic origin, 454
- criteria for proof of allergic origin, 456
- possible effect of repeated and prolonged allergic responses on structure, 454
- arteriosclerotic, with angina pectoris, successfully treated by application of abdominal belt, case report, 254
- in asthma, treatment of complications in, 468
- classification of, anatomic, 61
- etiology, 60
- functional, 63
- patients with cardiac disease and no limitation of physical activity, 64
- patients with cardiac disease and marked limitation of physical activity, 65
- patients with cardiac disease and slight limitation of physical activity, 64
- patients with cardiac disease unable to carry on any physical activity without discomfort, 65
- therapeutic, 65
- with regard to restriction of activity and periodic examinations, 65
- coexistence with asthma, 463
- diagnosis of, 465
- paroxysmal pulmonary edema in, 466
- complicated by asthma, 462
- dental extractions in, exacerbating effect of, 397
- diagnosis of, *see also* under Diagnosis and illustrative cases under names of diseases
- according to nomenclature of the American Heart Association, 65
- illustrative cases, 66
- differential diagnosis from asthma, 463
- from gallbladder disease, 480

## Heart disease—(Continued)

- effects of air travel on patients with, 250
  - of altitude on patients with, 250
  - of hyperthyroidism on, 354
  - of pregnancy on course of, 452
  - of traumatic injury upon, 487
  - etiology of, asthma as factor in, 462
  - functional, 410
    - classification of 63
    - neurocirculatory asthenia, 410
  - imaginary, 410
  - management of patients in, *see also* illustrative cases under names of diseases
  - obscure etiology of, method of listing, 66
  - potential, 65
  - in pregnancy, classification of, 445
    - etiology of, 445
    - management of, 453
    - risk of 452
    - types of, 445
  - pulmonary, *see* Cor pulmonale
  - referred abdominal pain in illustrative cases, 473
  - relation to gallbladder disease, 479
  - sudden death in, in coronary artery disease, 282
  - in coronary occlusion, 282
  - in hypertensive cardiovascular disease, 283
  - in syphilis of aorta, 283
  - treatment of, with combined oxygen therapy and thyroidectomy, 98
  - social service in, 565
  - illustrative cases, 567
    - with regard to convalescent care, 568
    - with regard to instruction of parents, 568
    - with regard to rehabilitation, 566
  - surgical, *see* Surgery, cardiac problem in
  - see also* illustrative cases under names of diseases
- Heart failure, 68, 115
- see also* Circulation, peripheral, failure of
  - backward, 71
  - in adults, 73
  - age incidence of, 73

## Heart failure, backward—(Continued)

- as cardiac emergency, 502
- treatment of, 505
- in cardiovascular syphilis, treatment of, 218
- caused by auricular fibrillation in senile heart, 398
- in children, 73
- complicated with cardiac asthma, hypertension, and hypersensitivity to digitalis and morphine, case report, 107
- complicating hypertension, case report with autopsy, 316, 317
- complicating rheumatic heart disease, 129
  - with auricular fibrillation, 395
- in congenital heart disease, 330
- in diabetes mellitus, 290
- diet in, 548
  - in convalescence, 550
  - with 50 grams of protein and 1800 cal ories, 552
  - fluid restriction in, 543
  - with 45 grams of protein and 1400 calories, 551
- Karell diet, 548
- effects of air travel in, 251
- effects of altitude in, 251
- etiology of, 73
- fatal 6 years after recovery from coronary occlusion complicated by complete heart block, 284
  - at unusually early age following rheumatic heart disease, 143
- fever in, 74
- following traumatic injury of the heart, 490
- in hypertension, treatment of, 309
- in infections, 436
- postoperative, 476
- in pregnancy, prevention of, 453
- prognosis in, 103
- with pulsus alternans complicating hypertension, case report, 407

## Heart failure, backward—(Continued)

- sedimentation rate of erythrocytes in, 58
- with stenosis and regurgitation at all valvular orifices, case report, 111
- in surgical patients, delay of operation in, 476
- in syphilitic heart disease, fatal case, with autopsy, 107
- treatment of, 74
  - abdominal paracentesis 95
  - avoidance of over treatment during short periods of time, 90
  - avoidance of physical and mental excitement and worry, 75
  - beds for, 74
  - bedside commodes, 74
  - barbitates, 74
  - comfort of patient, 74
  - diuretic drugs, 87
  - follow up treatment, 103
  - general measures, 74
  - importance of slow treatment, 91
  - laxatives, 75
  - management of patient in, illustrative cases, 105
  - mechanical measures, 92
  - morphine, 75
  - ouabain, 85
  - oxygen therapy, 98
  - with Southey's tubes, 97
  - squill, 85
  - strophanthin, 84
  - thoracentesis, 93
  - thyroidectomy, 102
  - urguin, 85
  - venesection, 92
- as cause of biliary dyskinesia, 477
- of embolism, 478
- classification of types according to Harrison, 70
- congestive, *see* Heart failure backward
- during anesthesia, 474
- during convalescence, principles for selection of, 551
- in pregnancy, diagnosis of 449

- Heart failure—(Continued)**  
 dyskineic syndrome, *see*  
 Heart failure, back-  
 ward  
 following cardiac compression  
 in metastatic tumor,  
 430  
 forward, 71  
 sudden death five days  
 after operation for  
 thyrotoxicosis, 364  
 gastrointestinal symptoms of,  
 477  
 hypertension in, 296  
 left sided, 68  
 of left ventricle, 68  
 acute, *see* Asthma, cardiac  
 with cardiac asthma in pa-  
 tient with past his-  
 tory of bronchial  
 asthma, differential  
 diagnosis and man-  
 agement of patient,  
 114  
 mechanisms of, 68  
 in coronary occlusion, 72  
 factors producing strain on  
 the heart, 69  
 hindrance to diastolic fill-  
 ing of heart, 72  
 in ventricular fibrillation,  
 72  
 of right ventricle, etiology  
 of, 69  
 right sided, 68  
 signs of, in infections, 436  
 in subacute bacterial endo-  
 carditis, 191  
 symptoms of, 68  
 in syphilitic cardiovascular  
 disease, prognosis in,  
 111  
 treatment of, 111  
 treatment of, digitalis, 76  
 Heart hospital, for children,  
 daily routine in, 132  
 educational facilities in,  
 132  
 for treatment of rheumatic  
 heart disease, 130
- Heart murmurs, 15**  
 Austin Flint, 21  
 at birth, as sign of congenital  
 heart disease, 329  
 in cardiovascular syphilis,  
 212  
 clinical significance of, 15  
 continuous, 20  
 determination of site of origin  
 of, 17  
 diastolic, 17, 20  
 Durozier, 17
- Heart murmurs—(Continued)**  
 Graham Steell, 21  
 in hypertension, 303  
 intensity of, factors involved  
 in, 18  
 significance of, 18  
 in patent ductus arteriosus,  
 20  
 in pregnancy, 444  
 in subacute bacterial endo-  
 carditis, 191  
 systolic, 17  
 aortic, in cardiovascular  
 syphilis, 212  
 cardiorespiratory, 138  
 disappearance of, factors  
 involved in, 138  
 evaluation of, as symptom  
 in rheumatic heart  
 disease, 138, 141  
 functional, 138  
 hemic, 138  
 terminology with relation to  
 quality, duration and  
 intensity, 18, 19  
 timing of, 16  
**Heart sounds, 13**  
 amplification and recording  
 of, cautions in, 23  
 amplification mechanisms for  
 record of, 21  
 in cardiovascular syphilis,  
 aortic second sounds,  
 212  
 electrocardiographic record of,  
 23  
 first, 13  
 gallop, 15  
 presystolic, 15  
 protodiastolic, 15  
 graphic record of, 21, 22  
 in hypertension, 303  
 microphone record of, 22  
 pericardial friction, 15  
 pistol shot, 20  
 precordial friction, 14  
 pulmonary second, accentua-  
 tion of, 14  
 recording of, 23  
 cautions in, 23  
 instruments for, 23  
 second aortic, 13  
 splitting of, 14  
 stethographic record of, 23  
 terminology with relation to  
 quality, duration and  
 intensity, 18, 19
- Heart strain, as misused ex-  
 pression, 532**  
 primary, on both ventricles,  
 etiology of, 69  
 left ventricular, etiology of,  
 69
- Heart strain, primary—(Contd.)**  
 right ventricular, etiology  
 of, 69
- Heikes, H. E. and Olga Tat-  
 tersfield, Social serv-  
 ice in treatment of  
 heart disease, 565**
- Heliotherapy, in heart disease,  
 521**
- Helium, and oxygen, in treat-  
 ment of asthma, 101**
- Hematuria, as contraindication  
 for mercurial diuret-  
 ics, 93**
- Hemoptysis, as cardiac symp-  
 tom, 6**  
 as complication of rheumatic  
 heart disease, 129  
 in mitral disease, evaluation  
 of, 146
- Heparin dangers of, 200**
- Heparin sulfapyridine, in treat-  
 ment of subacute  
 bacterial endocarditis, 192**  
 dangers of, 200  
 results of, 200  
 technic of, 200
- Heredity, as factor in cardiovas-  
 cular diagnosis, 3**
- History of patient, 2**  
 age and sex, 3  
 past medical, 3  
 value of patient's description  
 of his illness, 2
- Hirsuteness, as symptom of car-  
 diac disease, 6**
- Hodges Eyster cardiac slide-  
 rule, 34, 36**
- Home treatment of cardiac chil-  
 dren, as aided by  
 social service, 566**  
 of convalescents from rheu-  
 matic heart disease,  
 140
- Hydrotherapy, in heart disease,  
 514**  
 effects of, 515
- Hypennism, *see* Hypogly-  
 cemia, spontaneous**
- Hyperpyrexia, *see* Fever ther-  
 apy**
- Hypertension, 292**  
 age incidence of, 297  
 allergic, 460  
 aortic measurements in, 44  
 blood pressure level in, 304  
 classification of, 294  
 endocrine, 294  
 metabolic, 294  
 neurogenic, 294  
 renal, 294

**Hypertension—(Continued)**

- complications of, angina pectoris, electrocardiogram in case of, 406
- beginning congestive failure with pulsus alternans, case report, 407
- cardiovascular, 292
  - duration of interval before death, 292
- complete heart block and Adams Stokes seizures, case report of, 404
- congestive failure and cardiac asthma in patient hypersensitive to digitalis and morphine, case report, 107
- congestive heart failure, case report with autopsy, 316, 317
  - management of patient, 105
  - pulsus alternans as symptom in, 303
- dissecting aneurysm of the aorta, 322
  - illustrative case 324, 325
- dyspnea and cardiac failure, digitalization, 309
- influencing prognosis 305
- treatment of venesection, 319
- in diabetes mellitus, 288
- diagnosis of 303
  - cardiac hypertrophy, 303
  - murmurs and sounds 303
  - physical examination for, 304
  - renal symptoms in 304
- diet in 543
- effect of, upon course of rheumatic heart disease with mitral stenosis, 154
- electrocardiogram in, 634, 652
- etiology of 293
  - coarctation of the aorta as factor in, 296
- congestive heart failure, 294
- endocrine substances involved in, 293
- injuries of the brain stem as factor in 293

**Hypertension, etiology of—(Continued)**

- mixed and unclassified causes of, 294
- neurogenic factors in, 293
- poisons, 299
- familial tendency of, 297
- in gout, 296
- in heart failure, 296
- heredity in, 298
- illustrative cases, 314
- incidence of, 297
- malignant, 296
  - complications of, encephalopathy, treatment of, harmful effects of sweating in, 320
  - treatment of, magnesium sulfate, 320
  - spinal puncture, 320
  - treatment of, 319
  - venesection, 319
  - vomiting, 319
- differential diagnosis from chronic nephritis, 319
- in girl of 21 years, unsuccessful medical treatment in, 318
- ophthalmoscopic changes in, 303
- retinal changes in, 302
- symptoms of, cerebral, 320
- in young man, bilateral esliac ganglionectomy in case of, 320
- metabolic, 296
- in mitral stenosis, possible beneficial effect of, 156
- mortality of, 321
- murmurs and sounds in, 303
- in obese patients, advantages of spa treatment in, 517
- predisposition to, 297
- premature ventricular contractions in, 382
- prognosis in, 305
  - as influenced by complications, 305
  - in women, 305
- prolonged, with excessive unnecessary treatment, case report, 314
- racial incidence of, 297
- in relation to rheumatic heart disease, 156
- renal, 295
  - endocrine stimulation as factor in, 295
  - humoral mechanism of, 296

**Hypertension, renal—(Contd.)**  
nervous reflex as factor in, 295

- signs of, 299
- arteriosclerosis, 299
- cardiac enlargement, 299
- increased pulmonary blood pressure, 299
- sudden death in, incidence of, 283
- susceptibility to, 297
  - test for, 298
- symptoms of, 300
  - cardiac, 301
  - cardiac asthma, 300
  - dyspnea, 300
  - nervous, 301
  - visual, 302
- treatment of, 303
  - in absence of cardiac enlargement 306
  - adrenalectomy, 310
  - for congestive failure, 303
  - daily regimen, 306
  - with drugs, 307
    - bismuth subnitrate, 307
    - iodides, 308
    - nitrites, 307
    - sedatives, 308
  - endocrine products, 308
  - excessive and unnecessary, 314
  - for paroxysmal dyspnea or cardiac asthma, 307
  - physiotherapy, 308
  - readjustment of work in, 306
  - surgical, 310
    - colectomy, 311
    - phylotomy, 311
    - splanchnicectomy, 311
    - venesection in, 308
- Hypertension, *see* Fever therapy
- Hypertthyroidism, 353
  - see also* Thyrotoxicosis
  - angina pectoris in, 353
  - auricular fibrillation in, 377
    - incidence of, 357
  - basal metabolic rate in, 355
  - blood pressure in, 355
  - cardiac involvement in, incidence of, 353
  - in children, roentgenotherapy in, 359
  - course of, 356
  - crisis in, postoperative, 358
    - case report with autopsy, 363
  - prevention of, 358
  - significance of adrenalectomy in, 364

- Hyperthyroidism, crisis in, post-operative—(Continued)**  
 signs of, 358  
 treatment of, 358  
 diagnosis of, 354  
 effect on previous heart disease, 354  
 electrocardiogram in, 355  
 heart in, 360  
 illustrative cases, 359  
 incidence of, 354  
 palpitation in, 353  
 pathology of, 354  
 signs of, 353  
 simulating mitral stenosis 356  
 sudden postoperative death due to circulatory failure, 366  
 tachycardia in, 353  
 treatment of, 356  
 diet in, 358  
 irradiation, 359  
 pre-operative, 357  
 digitalis, 357  
 iodine, 357  
 sedatives, 357  
 surgical, 356  
 weight loss in, 356
- Hypertrophy, cardiac, 33**  
 in beriberi, 554  
 bilateral, extreme, electrocardiogram in, 600  
 chronic, in athletes 535  
 congenital, 333  
 roentgenographic aspect, 333  
 signs of, 333  
 symptoms of, 333  
 in diagnosis of hypertensive heart disease, 303  
 estimation of, 33  
 etiology of, excessive indulgence in gymnastics and sports, 331  
 in hypertension, chest pain in, 4  
 orthodiagraphic estimation of, 34  
 precordial prominence in, 10  
 as sign of hypertension, 299
- Hypoglycemia, spontaneous, chest pain in, 289**
- Hypotension, 433**  
 etiology of, 434  
 orthostatic, 434  
 etiology of, 434
- Hypotension, orthostatic—(Continued)**  
 treatment of, ephedrine and benzedrine in, 435  
 secondary, treatment of, 435  
 treatment of, 435
- Hypothyroidism, 366**  
 etiology of, 366  
 sporadic cretinism, 366  
 following subtotal thyroidectomy for exophthalmic goiter, 362  
 postoperative, simulating nephritis, 362  
 treatment of, 363
- I**
- Impulse cardiac, path of, 581**  
 for contraction, relation to electrocardiogram, diagram of, 584
- Indigestion, acute, electrocardiogram taken 3 hours after attack of, 633**
- Individualization of patient, as task of social service worker, 565**
- Infarction, myocardial, electrocardiogram in, 634**  
 pulmonary, *see* Lungs, infarction of
- Infection, cardiac, electrocardiographic manifestation of, 48**
- Infections, cardiac manifestations in, 436**  
 congestive failure in, 436  
 prevention of, 437  
 treatment of, 436  
 caffeine, 436  
 camphor, cardiazol, etc., 437  
 digitalis and atropine, 437  
 ephedrine and posterior pituitary, 437  
 epinephrine hydrochloride, 437  
 strychnine, 437  
 focal, cardiac manifestations of, 440  
 in etiology of coronary artery disease, 261  
 inspection of patient for in cardiovascular diagnosis, 9  
 prevention of, importance of, in congenital heart disease, 351
- Influenza, cardiac manifestations of, 439**
- Inspection, in examination of patient for heart disease, 9**
- Insulin and glucose diet in angina pectoris, 246**
- Iodides, intolerance to, 218**  
 in treatment of hypertension 308
- Iodine, intravenous administration of, for thyroid crisis, 358**
- J**
- Jarisch Herxheimer reaction, 232**
- K**
- Karell diet, 548**  
 modified, 550
- Keith Flack noise, *see* Sinoauricular node**
- Kern, Richard A. Allergy of the heart 454**
- Kettering apparatus for hyperthermia value of 523**
- Kidneys, *see also* Hypertension renal, Nephritis, etc**  
 in subacute bacterial endocarditis 191
- Knee, sarcoma of, with metastases to right auricle and ventricle, case report with autopsy, 432**
- Krenkeluchs' method for determination of aortic diameter, 29, 35**
- Kymogram, 47**
- Kyphosis, in heart disease, 10**
- L**
- Laboratory aids in diagnosis, 56**
- Lead, as factor in production of hypertension, 299**
- Leads, electrocardiographic, 586**  
 Lead I, II and III, manner of obtaining, 586  
 precordial, multiple, 641  
 nomenclature, 642  
 single, 640  
 standardization of, 633, 640  
*see also* Electrocardiography, leads in



- Leather water bottle heart, in pericardial effusion, 41
- Leptothrix, as cause of subacute bacterial endocarditis, 189
- Leukocytes, count of, as diagnostic aid, 36
- Lips, color of, as factor in cardiovascular diagnosis, 6
- Liver, enlargement of, caused by heart failure, 477
- Lungs, atresia of, total, with defect of ventricular septum, dextroposition of the aorta and hypertrophy of the bronchial arteries, case report with autopsy, 343
- blood pressure in, increased in hypertension, 299
- carcinoma of cardiac involvement in, 432
- congestion of, in cardiac disease, 6
- in mitral stenosis, 153
- edema of, in cardiac asthma, 301
- examination of, in cardiac patient, 24
- infarction of, in mitral disease, diagnosis of, 146
- in mitral stenosis with and without congestive failure, incidence of, 146
- in rheumatic heart disease, 122
- stenosis of, *see* Stenosis, pulmonary
- symptomatology in cardiac disease, 6
- in rheumatic heart disease, 123
- 31
- Magnesium sulfate, in treatment of central nervous complications of malignant hypertension, 320
- Massage cardiac, *see also* Heart, massage of
- in treatment of heart disease, 521
- Mecholyl, dosage of, 386
- effects of, 386
- upon electrocardiogram, 337
- Mecholyl—(Continued)
- intravenous administration of, severe reaction to, 387
- in treatment of paroxysmal tachycardia, 386
- untoward effects of, 387
- treatment of, atropine sulfate, 387
- Medionectros, aortae idiopathica cystica, in dissecting aneurysm of the aorta, 323
- Meningococcus, as cause of acute bacterial endocarditis, 185
- as cause of subacute bacterial endocarditis, 189
- Mental shock, as cause of sudden death in heart disease, 283
- Merbaphen, *see* Novacortol
- composition of, 92
- Mercupurin, as diuretic, 83
- Mercurio suppositories, composition of, 92
- as diuretic, 83
- Mercury, organic, as diuretic, 83
- contraindications, 91
- esdriose, 92
- indications for, 91
- precautions in administration of, 91
- untoward effects of, 90
- intravenous administration of, avoidance of leakage into subcutaneous tissues, 39
- technique of, 89
- untoward effects of, mechanism of, 90
- Mersalyl, *see* Saltyrgan
- Metaphyllin, *see* Theophylline
- Metsazol, in treatment of complete heart block, 405
- Microphone for record of heart sounds, 22
- Minerals, dietary requirements of, 540
- Mitral regurgitation, orthodiagram in, 37
- Mitral stenosis, advanced, and regurgitation, orthodiagram in, 37, 38
- cardiac silhouette in, 39
- complications of, chronic rheumatic heart disease, 150
- pulmonary congestion, 153
- Mitral stenosis, complications of—(Continued)
- rheumatic heart disease, as influenced by hypertension, 154
- fluoroscopic picture in, 37
- hemoptysis in, evaluation of, 146
- hypertension in, beneficial effect of, 156
- orthodiagram in, 37
- pulmonary infarction in cases with and without congestive failure, 146
- in rheumatic heart disease, 123
- shape of heart in, 39
- stimulated by hyperthyroidism, 356
- Mitralisation, of orthodiagram, 37
- Morphine, advantages of, in treatment of congestive heart failure, 73
- hypersensitivity to, in patient with hypertension complicated by congestive failure, cardiac asthma and hypersensitivity to diet, case report, 107
- for relief of pain in acute coronary occlusion, 504
- in treatment of cardiac emergency with congestive failure, 505
- of senile heart, 561
- Myocardium, cloudy swelling of, in infections, 430
- diseases of, electrocardiogram in, 49
- infarction of, in coronary artery disease, electrocardiogram in, 633
- penetration of, 489
- Myxedema, 372
- see also* Hyperthyroidism
- adult type of, 367
- blood cholesterol in, 371
- complications of, arteriosclerosis, 372
- cardiac, 367
- coronary arteriosclerosis, with death following second attack of coronary thrombosis, 371

## Myxedema—(Continued)

- course of, 367
- diagnosis of, 367
- electrocardiogram in, 657
- following irradiation, fatal coronary disease with autopsy, case report, 369
- illustrative cases, 369
- induced, 370
- intolerance for digitalis in, 369
- juvenile, 366
- postoperative, 362, 3
- spontaneous, 370
- symptoms of, 367
- treatment of, 368
- with thyroid preparations, 369
- with thyroxine, 368
- following total thyroidectomy for heart failure, 103

## N

- Nausea, as symptom of overdigitalization, 79
- Neck, examination of, in cardiovascular diagnosis, 9
- Neostigmine, in treatment of cardiovascular syphilis, chest pain in elderly as contraindication, 227
- dosage of, 218
- Nephritis, chronic, cardiac asthma in, 101
- differential diagnosis from malignant hypertension, 319
- stimulated by postoperative by parathyroidism, 362
- Nerve block, for relief of pain in aneurysm, 227
- sympathetic in treatment of angina pectoris, 256
- Nerves, of heart, extrinsic, diagram of, 604
- sympathetic, a diagram of, 257
- spinal, anterior roots of, resection of, for hypertension, 311
- Nervous system, instability of, in auricular fibrillation, 397
- sympathetic trunk, location of, 257
- symptoms of, in hypertension, 301
- Nervousness in children, as sign of rheumatic heart disease, 123

- Neuritis, intercostal, following alcohol injection for relief of angina, 258
- Neuroses, due to excessive examination of pulse, 374
- Neurosis, cardiac, 410
- Neurosypphilis, complicating rheumatic heart disease, 158
- see also Syphilis*
- Newspaper health talks, as possible danger to psychoneurotics, 417
- Nitrates, as diuretics, 87
- Nitrites, indiscriminate prescription of, harmful, 115
- in treatment of angina pectoris, 247
- of coronary artery disease, 272
- of hypertension, 307
- Nitroglycerine tablets, in treatment of angina pectoris, 247
- Nomenclature for diseases of heart and blood vessels, by American Heart Association, 59
- Nose, manifestations in asthma with heart disease, treatment of, 468
- Novasol, as diuretic, 88
- synergistic effect with ammonium chloride, 90
- Novocaine, intradermal injection of, as test for differentiating organic from nervous heart disease, 420

## O

- Obesity, diet in, 544
- in hypertensive patients, advantages of therapy in, 517
- Occupation, working hours, in relation to heart disease, 538
- Occupational therapy, in treatment of heart disease, 523
- Oertel system of graded walking as exercise for patients with heart disease, 528
- Old age, *see also Heart, senile*

- Orthodiagram, characteristic changes in, 35
- in checking results of percussion, 13
- mitralization of, 37
- normal, 34
- serial, from rheumatic heart disease with regurgitation and stenosis at mitral and aortic valves, 39
- Orthodiagraphy in cardiovascular diagnosis, 25, 27
- Orthopnea, 5, 6
- Oscillometric index, 54
- Osteoarthritis pulmonary, *see Fingers and toes*
- clubbing of, in congenital heart disease, 330
- Oxygen, administration of, 101
- in cardiac emergency of acute coronary occlusion, 504
- face mask for administration of, 101
- and helium gas in treatment of asthma, 102
- Oxygen face tent, 101
- Oxygen tent, 101
- Oxygen therapy, in backward heart failure, 99
- combined with thyroidectomy for heart disease, 98
- importance of trained regulation of, 103
- methods of administration of, 100
- technic of, schematic presentation of, 99

## P

- P wave, in electrocardiogram, 589
- in children, 650
- significance of changes in, 591
- P-R interval, in electrocardiogram, abnormal, significance of, 592
- in children, 650
- (P-Q) interval, in electrocardiogram, 590
- prolongation of, in acute rheumatic fever, 45
- in first stage heart failure, 593

- Pain, abdominal, as sign of rheumatic heart disease 124
- in acute coronary occlusion, control of, 272
- anginal, *see* Angina pectoris
- in chest as contraindication to neparphenamine in cardiovascular syphilis 227
- as symptom of coronary artery disease, 264
- in young persons, differential diagnosis from angina pectoris, 255
- growing pains as manifestation of rheumatic infection 136
- in lower lobe pneumonia, 173
- precordial, *see also* Angina pectoris
- in pericarditis, 4
- retrosternal *see* Angina pectoris
- Palpation, in cardiovascular diagnosis, 11
- Palpitation as cardiac emergency 501
- as cardiovascular symptom, 5
- as sign of invasion of heart in rheumatic heart disease, 124
- Paracentesis abdominal, anatomical landmarks for, 95
- in backward heart failure, 95
- equipment for, 96
- position of patient for, 96
- pericardial, 164
- in children, 167
- diagram showing course of internal mammary artery and signs for puncture of pericardial sac, 165
- epigastric approach, 166
- equipment for, 166
- illustration of, 166
- posterior approach, 166
- routes for, 164
- suction apparatus for, 167
- technic of, 165
- Paravertebral injections of alcohol in treatment of angina pectoris, 256
- Paravertebral injections—(Continued)
- of thoracic sympathetic ganglia, method of inserting needle, 257
- technic of, 257
- Parents, instruction of, as important duty of social service worker, 566
- Percussion, 11
- of aorta, 12
- in cardiovascular diagnosis, 11
- of left cardiac border, 11
- orthodiagrammatic check of, 12
- of right cardiac border, 11
- outlining heart before fluoroscopy, 12
- Persarteritis nodosa, allergic, 461
- Pericardectomy, as treatment for chronic constrictive pericarditis, 184
- Pericarditis, 162
- acute, 162
- bacteriology of, 162
- as cardiac emergency with chest pain, 498
- diagnosis of, roentgenologic, 164
- electrocardiogram in, 555
- etiology of, 162
- fibrinous, differential diagnosis from coronary disease, 268
- during course of rheumatic infection, case report, 167
- treatment of, illustrative cases, 167
- pathology of, 162
- rheumatic, 168
- signs of, 164
- cardiac silhouette, 164
- cardiac tamponade, 161
- Ewart's, 164
- pulsus paradoxus, 164
- suppurative, complicating pneumonia, treatment of rib resection, 173
- secondary to pneumococcus pneumonia, roentgen findings in illustrative case, 172
- to Type II pneumococcus pneumonia, with drainage and recovery, case report, 171
- Pericarditis, acute, suppurative—(Continued)
- surgical drainage of, 173
- treatment of, aspiration mortality of, 175
- symptoms of, 163
- treatment of, paracentesis, 164
- adhesive, as sequela of acute suppurative pericarditis, incidence of, after adequate surgical drainage, 175
- chest pain in, 4
- chronic, 179
- adhesive hands in, distribution of, 180
- calcific, 180
- calcium deposits in, roentgenographic demonstration of, 41
- cardiac silhouette in, 41
- constrictive, treatment of, diuretics for, 184
- adhesions and chronic tamponade in, 189
- electrocardiogram in, 658
- illustrative case, 183
- symptoms of, 181
- ascites, 182
- treatment of, harmful effects of symptomatic therapy, 184
- pericardectomy 184
- pre-operative, 184
- electrocardiogram in, 655
- pathology of, soldier's sputa, 180
- signs and symptoms of, 179
- treatment of, 182
- surgical, indications for 182
- Pericardium, effusion of, as cardiac emergency, 502
- etiology of, 510
- signs of, 510
- treatment of, 510
- electrocardiogram in, 654
- fluoroscopic picture of, 41
- rheumatic, differential diagnosis from tuberculous pericarditis, 178
- tuberculous, adhesions in, 178
- amount of fluid in, 179
- case report with autopsy findings, 175
- diagnosis of, pneumopericardium in, 177

*Pericardium, tuberculous—(Continued)*

- differential diagnosis from rheumatic pericarditis, 178
- incidence of, 175
- mode of infection in, 176
- symptoms of, 177
- treatment of, 179
  - for chronic constrictive pericarditis, 179

*Pericardium, pneumococcus invasion of, 171*

- surgical drainage of, 174

*Petechiae on abdomen in subacute bacterial endocarditis, 186*

*Phenobarbital, possible harmful effects in old subjects, 315*

*Physician social worker relationship, 572*

*Physiotherapy, in heart disease, 512*

- hydrotherapy, 514
- carbon dioxide bath, 514
- spa treatment, 513
- in treatment of hypertension, 508

*Pitressin, in treatment of circulatory symptoms of beri-beri, 554*

*Pituitrin, contraindications in cardiac complications of pregnancy, 451*

*Planimeter calculation of cardiac area, 56*

*Pneumococcus, as cause of acute bacterial endocarditis, 185*

- as cause of pericarditis, 162

*Pneumonia, cardiac manifestations of, 439*

- pneumococcus type II, complicated by acute suppurative pericarditis, 171
- referred pain in, 173

*Pneumopericardium, diagnostic, 167*

- for diagnosis of tuberculous pericarditis, 177

*Polycythemia in congenital heart disease, 330*

- pathogenesis of, 330

*Positions, for fluoroscopy, standard, 28*

*Potassium iodide, in treatment of cardiovascular syphilis, dosage of, 218*

*Preface, IX*

*Pregnancy, cardiac involvement in, 442*

*cardiac manifestations in, auricular fibrillation, 449*

- anesthetization in, 450
- classification of, 446
- congestive failure, 448
- dyspnea, 445
- edema of feet, 445
- in patients with definite evidence of heart disease, 447

*delivery in, 448*

*management of, 447*

*in patients without heart disease, 446*

*management of, 447*

*treatment of, 449*

*Cesarean section, 450*

*diet in, 449*

*oxygen, 449*

*pituitrin in, 451*

*in puerperium, 451*

*sterilization, 450*

*termination of pregnancy, 450*

*as complication of rheumatic heart disease, 129*

*effect on course of heart disease, 432*

*electrocardiographic changes in, 444*

*heart in, as affected by increased blood volume, 443*

*heart disease in, etiology of, 445*

*heart murmurs in, 444*

*in patients with heart disease advisability of, 451*

*as prognostic factor in rheumatic heart disease, 129*

*termination of, for heart disease, 450*

*Premature beats see Extrasystoles*

*Protein, dietary requirements of, 539*

*Psychoneurosis, 417*

*cardiac, complicating congenital heart disease, 422*

*complicating rheumatic heart disease, 419*

*coronary occlusion, 421*

*in coronary disease, 421*

*test for differentiation from*

*Psychoneurosis, cardiac—(Continued)*

*organic heart disease, 420*

*cardiac symptoms in, 417*

*diagnosis of, 418*

*palpitation, 418*

*etiology of, 417*

*illustrative cases, 419*

*symptoms of, 418*

*treatment of, 418*

*Puerperium, complicated by acute gonococcal endocarditis, case report with autopsy, 187*

*complicated by heart disease, treatment of, 451*

*Pulmonary valve, stenosis of, cardiac silhouette in, 43*

*Pulse, examination of diagnostic value of, 374*

*Pulse pressure, 53*

*Pulsus alternans, 407*

*with beginning congestive failure in hypertension, case report, 407*

*diagnosis of, 375, 409*

*by sphygmomanometer, 409*

*electrocardiographic findings in, 409*

*etiology of, 409*

*as sign of congestive failure in hypertension, 303*

*diagnosis of, 375, 409*

*Pulsus paradoxus as sign of acute pericarditis, 164*

*Purkinje network, in conduction system, diagram of, 582*

**Q**

*QRS complex of electrocardiogram, changes in significance of, 592*

*in children, 651*

*waves in electrocardiogram, variations of, 594*

*or ventricular complexes, in electrocardiogram, 590*

*QT interval, in electrocardiogram, 591*

- Quinidine, hypersensitivity to as indication of possible allergic mechanism in heart disease, 456
- sudden death following administration of, in patients with fibrillation of long standing, 366
- toxic effects of, 385
- cardiac, 384
- gastrointestinal, 384
- in treatment of auricular flutter 393
- of paroxysmal tachycardia, 383
- untoward effects of, gastrointestinal symptoms, 384
- Quinidine sulfate, administration and dosage of, 384
- R
- RS-T interval, in electrocardiogram, 591
- changes in, 595
- in children, 651
- Resuscitation, cardiac, in emergencies, 502
- Readjustment of activities, as important factor in treatment of heart disease, as illustrated in case of coronary artery disease complicated by angina pectoris, 278
- Regurgitation, aortic, fluoroscopic picture of, 40
- orthodiagram in, 38
- mitral, orthodiagram in, 37
- tricuspid fluoroscopic picture of, 40
- Respiration type of, diagnostic significance of, 6
- Retina, in malignant hypertension, 302
- Rheumatic carditis, sedimentation rate of erythrocytes in, 57
- Rheumatic heart disease, 117, 161
- active infection with early fatal congestive failure and autopsy, illustrative case, 143
- Rheumatic heart disease—(Continued)
- age of onset, 118
- with aortic regurgitation, no signs of active infection and slight cardiac enlargement, illustrative case, 141
- bacteriology of, 118
- as cause of acute pericarditis, 162
- cerebral embolism as cause of death in, 150
- in children, treatment of, social service as factor in, 566
- chronic complications of, mitral stenosis, 150
- course of, 150
- complications of, acute pericarditis, 167
- auricular fibrillation and congestive failure, 395
- auricular fibrillation, pulmonary emboli and paroxysmal dyspnea, 152
- auricular flutter, 393
- congestive heart failure, 129
- embolism, 148
- mitral stenosis and congestive failure, influence of multiple pulmonary emboli on course and prognosis of, illustrative case, 144
- embolic manifestations, illustrative case, 149
- influence of hypertension on course of the disease, illustrative case, 154
- neurosyphilis, 158
- treatment of, illustrative case, 160
- psychoneurosis, 419
- regurgitation and stenosis at mitral and aortic valves, serial orthodiagrams in, 39
- stenosis and regurgitation at all valvular orifices and congestive failure of long duration, case report, 111
- subacute bacterial endocarditis, 129
- thrombosis, 129
- thyrotoxicosis, illustrative case, 154
- Rheumatic heart disease, complications of—(Continued)
- with sudden death on fifth postoperative day, case report with autopsy, 364
- danger of later development of subacute bacterial endocarditis in, 142
- diagnosis of, cardiac examination in, 124
- physical examination, 124
- diet in, 545
- differential diagnosis from neurosyphilis, illustrative case, 158
- effect of colds on, 140
- etiology of, 118
- environmental influences, 119
- evaluation of systolic murmur as an only symptom in suspected cases, illustrative case, 136
- exacerbating effect of dental extractions during, 169
- examination for, special methods of, 127
- familial incidence of, 119
- first stage heart block in, case report of, 401
- healed valvular lesions of, significance of, 127
- hypertension, in relation to, 156
- lesions of, 119
- mild, with acute carditis following typical joint involvements, illustrative case, 139
- mistaken for syphilitic aortitis owing to positive W.R. case report, 222
- mode of entry of causative agent in, 158
- pathology of, 119, 121
- Aschoff cells, 119
- cerebral, 122
- inflammatory changes, 121
- myocardial damage in, 122
- in other organs of the body, 122
- invasion of pericardium, 121
- pulmonary, 122
- relation of structural changes to physical signs, 121

- Rheumatic heart disease, pathology of—(Continued)  
     subcutaneous nodule, 119  
     vascular, 122  
 prevention of, 136  
     early recognition of manifestations, 136  
 prognosis in, 128  
     environment as factor in, 128  
     factors and complications influencing, 128  
     individual factors, 128  
     occupation as factor in, 128  
     pregnancy as factor in, 129  
 racial factors, 118  
 sedimentation rate of erythrocytes as gauge of status of condition, 130  
 sequelae of, calcareous aortic stenosis, 127  
 signs and symptoms of, 122  
 subcapsular pulmonary dullness in, 169  
 symptoms of, abdominal pain, 123  
     anorexia, 123  
     aortic or mitral valvular involvement, 126  
     invasion of heart in, 124  
     fever, 122  
     hemorrhagic episodes, 124  
     loss of weight, 122  
     nervous child, 123  
     pallor, 122  
     sore throat, 123  
     pulmonary, 123  
     valvular, 125  
 temperate zone disease, 118  
 treatment of, 129  
     climatic, 135  
     convalescent care, 132  
     dietary measures, 135  
     digitalis for cardiac failure, 143  
     follow up examinations, 133  
     in heart hospital, 130  
     illustrative cases, 136  
     management of arthritis, 133  
     management of chorea, 134  
     prevention of recurring upper respiratory tract infection, 135  
     program for home convalescence, 140  
     regulation of activity, 130  
     rest, 130  
     rib resection, 135
- Rheumatic heart disease, treatment of—(Continued)  
     roentgen rays, 135  
     sera and vaccines, 135  
     tonsillectomy, 134  
     pre and postoperative administration of sulfanilamide to prevent blood stream infection, 135  
     valvulotomy, 135  
     valvular involvement, order of frequency in, 157  
     prolonged therapy in, with autopsy in illustrative case, 156  
 Rheumatic nodules, 120  
 Rhizotomy, in treatment of hypertension, 311  
 Ribs, resection of, for rheumatic heart disease, 135  
     scalloping margin of, in coarctation of the aorta, 337  
 Rickets, heart in, 557  
 Roentgen rays effects on the thyroid gland, 370  
 Roentgenology in cardiovascular diagnosis, 25  
 Roentgenotherapy, of hyperthyroidism, 359  
     in rheumatic heart disease, 135  
     of thyroid gland, followed by myxedema and fatal coronary disease, case report with autopsy, 369  
 Roger's disease, congenital interventricular septal defect, 336  
     direction of blood flow in, 336  
     prognosis in, 334
- S
- S A node, see Sino auricular node  
 Salicylates, in treatment of arthritis in rheumatic heart disease, 133  
 Salts, inorganic, as diuretics, 87  
 Silyrgan, as diuretic, 88  
     composition of, 92  
 Sanborn stetho-cardiette, 584  
 Sarcoma, metastatic, of heart, from knee, 432
- Scarlet fever, cardiac manifestations in, 438  
 Schools, special for cardiac children, 510  
     for children with congenital heart disease, 351  
 Scurvy, heart in, 557  
 Sedatives, in pre-operative treatment of hyperthyroidism, 357  
     in treatment of hypertension, 308  
 Septicemia, streptococcus viridans, attempted cure by excision of arteriovenous aneurysm, 202  
 Septum, cardiac, interauricular congenital defects of, 341  
     entire absence of, 341  
 Serotherapy in rheumatic heart disease, 135  
     with immunized horse serum, in subacute bacterial endocarditis, 193  
 Sex, as factor in cardiovascular diagnosis, 3  
 Shock, see Circulatory failure, peripheral, Mental shock,  
     delayed, in old persons, 563  
     therapeutic, during antisiphilitic therapy, 232  
 Sino auricular node, impulse for cardiac contraction originating in, 583  
 Sinus arrest, during arteriosclerotic heart disease, 377  
     case report of, 377  
     electrocardiogram of, 593  
 Sinus arrhythmia, 380  
     in children, 651  
     treatment of, 380  
 Sinus bradycardia, caused by hypersensitive carotid sinus, case report, 378  
     electrocardiogram in, 603  
 Sinus mechanisms, electrocardiographic records of, 603  
 Sinus node, see Sino auricular node  
 Sinus tachycardia, case report of, 376  
 Sinuses, infection of, complicating asthma in heart disease, treatment of, 469

- Situs inversus*, *see* Dextrocardia
- Size, of heart, 33
- in athletes after sudden exertion, 534
- measurement of, methods for, 33
- orthodiagraphic estimation of, diagonals for, 34
- planimeter calculation of, 36
- Slide-rule, cardiac, Hodges-Eyster type, 34, 36
- Sobisminol mass, bismuth treatment for cardiovascular syphilis, 217
- undesirable effects of, 217
- Social service, in treatment of heart disease, 565
- see also* under names of diseases under treatment
- Social service worker, as assistant to physician, in treatment of heart disease, 572
- Sodium bromide, undesirable effects in old persons, 315
- chloride, restriction of, in congestive heart failure, 552
- nitrite, in treatment of angina pectoris, 247
- Soldier heart, 410
- Soldier's spots, in chronic pericarditis, 180
- Sound tracing, simultaneous with electrocardiogram, 584
- Southey's tubes for treatment of edema, 98
- Spa treatment in heart disease, 513
- resorts for, 514
- value in adjusting patient to restricted living, 520
- Sphygmomanometers, care of, 51
- Sphygmomanometry, 51
- Spinal cord, compression of, in aneurysm, 240
- Spinal puncture, for relief of encephalopathy in malignant hypertension, 320
- Splanchnicectomy, in treatment of hypertension, 311
- indications for, 312
- Spleen, infarct of, in subacute bacterial endocarditis, 201
- Squill, in treatment of backward heart failure, 85
- Staphylococcus aureus, as cause of acute bacterial endocarditis, 185
- as cause of pericarditis, 162
- Status asthmaticus, treatment of dyspnea in, 469
- Stenocardia, *see* Angina pectoris
- Stenosis, mitral, *see* Mitral stenosis
- pulmonary, complete, differential diagnosis from tetralogy, 350
- congenital, electrocardiogram in, 345
- electrocardiogram in, 348
- with patent foramen ovale, case report with autopsy, 346
- signs of, 348
- of pulmonary valve, cardiac silhouette in, 43
- tricuspid, fluoroscopic picture in, 40
- Sterilization, for heart disease in pregnancy, 450
- Stetho-cardiette, 584
- Stethogram, for separate records of heart sounds, 23
- Stethoscope, electrical, 23
- Pilling Bowles combination type, with diaphragm and Ford chest pieces, 14
- Stockings, elastic, in treatment of hypotension, 433
- Stomach, effect of digitals on, 79
- Streptococcus, as cause of pericarditis, 162
- hemolyticus*, as cause of acute bacterial endocarditis, 185
- viridans*, as cause of subacute bacterial endocarditis, 185, 189
- in heart disease, 57
- infection by, as affected by trauma, 483
- repeated invasion of blood stream during lifetime, 198
- routine blood studies for detection of, 57
- septicemia, attempted cure by excision of arteriovenous aneurysm, 202
- Strophanthus, 84
- Students, cardiovascular examination of, 336
- Sulfanilamide, effects of, arrhythmia, 393
- as pre- and postoperative measure to prevent blood stream infection following tonsillectomy for rheumatic heart disease, 135
- in treatment of acute bacterial endocarditis, 189
- of subacute bacterial endocarditis, 192
- dosage of, 198
- Sulfapyridine, in treatment of subacute bacterial endocarditis, 192
- results of, 199
- Suppositories, diuretic, 89
- Surgery, in the aged, management of, 563
- assessment of surgical risk as based on type of surgical procedure, 473
- cardiac factors in, 471
- complete heart block, as judged on basis of myocardial reserve, 472
- response of heart to exercise, 471
- grades as based on study of functional capacity of heart, 473
- importance of detailed cardiac study in, 471
- preoperative cardiovascular consultation sheet, as aid in, 472
- value of electrocardiogram in, 473
- cardiac problems in, 471
- anesthesia, 474
- postoperative, 476
- in coronary disease with angina, 476
- surgical risk, 471
- electrocardiographic changes during operation, 474
- peripheral circulatory complications in, 471
- surgical risk, improvement of, by preoperative treatment, 476
- Sympathectomy, in treatment of angina pectoris, results of, 258

- Sympathetic nerve block, as treatment for angina pectoris, 236
- Symptoms, abdominal, produced by circulatory disturbances, 477
- cardiac, asthma, 5
- Cheyne Stokes respiration, 5
- chest pain, 4
- cough, 6
- cyanosis, 7
- dyspnea, 5
- edema, 7
- faintness, 6
- gastrointestinal, 6
- hemoptysis, 6
- hoarseness, 6
- orthopnea, 5
- palpitation, 5
- pulmonary, 6
- syncope, 6
- vertigo, 6
- Syncope, as cardiac emergency, 499
- cardiogenic, 72
- in cardiovascular diagnosis, 6
- carotid sinus, 72
- emotional, as cardiac emergency, 500
- due to extracardiac factors, 500
- types of, 72
- simple, 72
- vagal, as cardiac emergency, 500
- vago-vagal, 72
- vaso-vagal, 72
- Syphilis, cardiovascular, 209
- with aneurysm of aorta
- successful carotid jugular anastomosis in case of, 237
- with aneurysm of ascending aorta and survival for three years after wiring, case report, 229
- with aortic regurgitation, orthodiagram of, 44
- cupping of aortic leaflets and pulmonary artery in, 110
- diagnosis of, early, 214
- duration of life in, 219
- fluoroscopic examination of patient in, 212
- illustrative cases of, 220
- lesions of, 209
- aneurysm, 210
- cardiac, 215
- gumma, 211
- Syphilis, cardiovascular, lesions of—(Continued)
- chancere, 209
- of coronary orifices, 210
- obliterative endarteritis, 209
- at Philadelphia General Hospital, decreasing incidence of, 214
- prognosis in, 219
- sedimentation rate of erythrocytes in, 58
- signs of, 212
- aortic second sound, 212
- neurosyphilitic, 213
- unequal simultaneous blood pressure, 213
- with sudden death due to congestive failure, case report with autopsy findings, 109
- symptoms of, 213
- treatment of, dietary, 546
- reduction diet for ideal weight of 160 pounds, 800 calories 457
- for ideal weight of 160 pounds, 1000 calories, 547
- for ideal weight of 160 pounds, 1200 calories, 548
- in presence of aneurysm, 219
- of angina, 219
- of aortic regurgitation, 219
- of congestive failure, 218
- serology as guide to efficacy of, 233
- specific, 214
- antisyphilitic drugs, 232
- reactions to be avoided, 232
- bismuth in, 215
- iodide, 217
- neoursphenamine 217
- dosage of, 218
- potassium iodide, 218
- untreated, with aortitis
- aortic regurgitation, cardiac enlargement and fatal congestive failure, case report, 220
- as cause of angina pectoris, 244
- Syphilis, as cause—(Continued)
- of coronary artery disease, 261
- of heart block, 400
- serologic tests for, as aid in cardiovascular diagnosis, 56
- significance of, as factor in cardiovascular diagnosis, 3
- T
- T-wave, in electrocardiogram, 590
- effect of digitalis on, 649, 650
- in children, 651
- Tachycardia, in hyperthyroidism, 353
- paroxysmal, A V nodal, in absence of other evidence of heart disease, case report, 382
- allergic, 383, 455
- illustrative case report, 455
- auricular, as cardiac emergency, sequence of methods of treatment to be attempted, 506
- cause of, 506
- duration of, 506
- electrocardiogram in, 612, 613, 614
- symptoms of, 506
- treatment of, 506
- as cardiac emergency, treatment of, 499
- in children, 389
- etiology of, 383
- autointoxication, 383
- food allergy, 388, 390
- incidence of, 383
- nodal, electrocardiogram in, 613
- related to toxic foci, 381
- treatment of, colonic irrigations, 387
- digitalis in, 389
- mecholyl 386
- quinidine, 383
- indications for, 385
- rest, 389
- types of, 383
- ventricular, as cardiac emergency, treatment of, 506
- electrocardiogram in, 612, 614, 615
- symptoms of, 506



- Tachycardia, paroxysmal, ventricular—(*Continued*)  
 complicating acute coronary occlusion, case report, 390  
 treatment of, 390, 506  
 in young people, treatment of, in absence of cardiac failure, 503  
 supraventricular, 383  
 treatment of, induced vomiting, 385  
 ventricular, following acute coronary occlusion, 274  
 pre fibrillary, 383  
 electrocardiogram in, 622  
 harmful effects of epinephrine hydrochloride in, 403
- Tamponade, cardiac, acute in stab wound of right ventricle, with recovery following suture, case report, 494  
 chronic, 181  
 as symptom of constrictive pericarditis, 181  
 as sign of acute pericarditis, 164
- Tattersfield, Olga, H. E. Heikes  
 and Social service in treatment of heart disease, 565
- Teeth, extraction, exsuffrating effect on heart disease, 197
- Teleroentgenography, 26
- Tetralogy of Fallot, *see* Fallot, tetralogy
- Theobromine, as diuretic, 87  
 in treatment of coronary artery disease, 271
- Theobromine calcium, as diuretic, 87
- Theocalcin, as diuretic, 87
- Theocin, as diuretic, 87
- Theophylline, as diuretic, 87  
 in treatment of cardiac emergency of cardiac asthma, 505
- Therapeutic paradox, reaction to anti-syphilitic therapy, 232
- Therapy, approach to, 167  
 in heart disease, modern advances in, 1
- Thiamin chloride, in treatment of carotid sinus hypersensitivity, 379
- Thiamin chloride—(*Continued*)  
 in treatment of subacute bacterial endocarditis, 194
- Thoracentesis, essential equipment for, 94  
 outfit, 93  
 technique of procedure, 94  
 in treatment of backward heart failure, 93
- Throat, sore, in rheumatic heart disease, 123
- Thrombo-angitis obliterans, allergic, 461
- Thrombosis, ball valve, 152  
 as cardiac emergency, 501  
 complicating rheumatic heart disease, 129  
 of coronary arteries, *see* Coronary thrombosis
- Thyroid crises, *see* Hyperthyroidism
- Thyroid gland, diseases of, blood cholesterol, as aid in diagnosis and treatment, 371  
 cardiac involvement, 353  
 effects of roentgen rays on, 370  
 enlargement of, in pregnancy with resulting effect on heart activity, 442  
 hyperfunction of, as cause of angina pectoris, 244
- Thyroid therapy, addition of hydrochloric acid in cases of gastric hypacidity, 368
- Intest period following administration of, 368
- in myxedema, 368  
 effect on cardiac symptoms, 369  
 in prevention of Adams Stokes seizures, 405  
 variation in commercial preparations of, 368
- Thyroidectomy, subtotal, followed by hypothyroidism, 362  
 in thyrotoxicosis complicated by paroxysms of auricular flutter, 360  
 total, for coronary artery disease, 275  
 in treatment of heart failure, 102  
 after care in, 103  
 indications for, 103  
 selection of patients for, 103
- Thyrotoxicosis, *see also* Goiter, exophthalmic, hyperthyroidism  
 chest pain in, 4  
 complicated by paroxysms of auricular flutter, relieved by subtotal thyroidectomy, 360  
 complicating rheumatic heart disease, illustrative case, 154  
 rheumatic heart disease, with sudden death on fifth postoperative day, case report with autopsy, 364  
 diagnosis of, in elderly patients without signs of thyroid tumor, 362  
 electrocardiogram in, 603
- Thyroxine, in treatment of myxedema, 368
- Tiger mottling of heart in anemia, 424
- Tinnitus, as result of quinidine therapy, 385
- Tobacco, contraindicated in coronary artery disease 275  
 as factor in production of hypertension, 299
- Tonsillectomy, for rheumatic heart disease, 134  
 time for operation, 134
- Tonsils, in relation to heart disease, 440
- Trauma, *see* Heart, wounds and injuries of
- Trichlorethylene, in treatment of angina pectoris 248
- Tricuspid valves, lesions of, fluoroscopy in, 40
- Trimethyl xanthine, *see* Caffeine
- Tuberculosis, cardiac manifestations of, 440  
 pulmonary, complicating congenital heart disease, 330
- Tufnell diet for aneurysm, 232
- Tumors, cardiac, benign, incidence of, 429  
 myomatous, 429  
 diagnosis of, 432  
 illustrative cases, 430  
 malignant, sarcomas, 429, 432  
 metastatic, 430  
 with cardiac compression and failure, case report with autopsy, 434

- Tumors, cardiac, metastatic—  
(Continued)  
involving conduction system, 432  
primary, 429  
relation to structure of heart, 433  
secondary, 429  
types of, 429
- U
- Urguin, toxic effects of, 85  
in treatment of backward heart failure, 85
- Urinalysis, as an aid in cardiovascular diagnosis, 56  
in congestive heart failure, 56  
as diagnostic aid in hypertension with renal lesions, 304
- V
- Vaccinotherapy, in rheumatic heart disease, 133
- Vagal tone, increased, treatment of, 50
- Valves, cardiac, anatomic location of, 12  
bicuspid aortic and pulmonary, 334  
involvement of all of, in rheumatic heart disease, 156  
lesions of, associated with sudden death, 283  
healed, following rheumatic heart disease, 127  
in rheumatic heart disease, symptoms of, 125  
sclerosis of, in old persons, 560
- Valvulotomy, in treatment of rheumatic heart disease, 135
- Vegetables, classification of, according to carbohydrate content, 546
- Veins, jugular, swollen, 183
- Venesection, for relief of headaches and vomiting in hypertension, 319
- Venesection—(Continued)  
in treatment of backward heart failure, 92  
in treatment of hypertension, 308
- Ventricles, defibrillation of, in grafting procedures for coronary artery disease, 276  
left, failure of, in hypertension, with resulting cardiac asthma, 300  
rupture of, through area of infarction in unruptured coronary occlusion with sudden death, 280, 281  
stab wound of, electrocardiogram of, 651  
right, metastatic tumor of right auricle and, from sarcoma of the knee, case report 432  
stab wound of, with acute cardiac tamponade and recovery following suture, case report, 494  
tumor in, 408
- septum of, absence of membranous portion with complete absence of interauricular septum and congenital heart block, case report with autopsy, 343  
defect of, with complete pulmonary atresia, dextroposition of the aorta and hypertrophy of the bronchial arteries, case report with autopsy, 343
- Ventricular escape, in electrocardiogram, 606
- Ventricular strain, acute right electrocardiogram in, 653  
in electrocardiogram, 651  
left, in electrocardiogram, 653  
stimulated by bundle branch block, 652
- Vertebra, erosion of, in aneurysm, 240
- Vertigo, in cardiovascular diagnosis, 6
- Vitamin B<sub>1</sub>-deficiency, *see also* Beri beri  
adrenalin reaction in, as influenced by administration of vitamin B<sub>1</sub>, 554  
cardiovascular aspects of, illustrative cases, 556  
effect on heart, 554  
electrocardiogram in, 555  
heart in, 553  
autopsy findings, 554
- Vitamins, dietary requirements of, 540
- Vomiting, in hypertension, treatment of, venesection, 319  
as symptom of overdigitalization, 79
- W
- Walking, graded, for convalescent patients, 528  
as prescribed exercise in heart disease, 528  
Oertel system 528  
at Saratoga Springs, 528
- Weight, loss of, in hyperthyroidism, 356  
in rheumatic heart disease, 122
- Wile reaction, 232
- Wiring, in treatment of cardiovascular syphilis with aneurysm, 229  
*see also* Aneurysm,
- Withering, William, portrait of, frontispiece
- Work, adjustment of, to level of myocardial reserve, 285  
readjustment of, in treatment of hypertension, 306
- Wounds  
Heart, wounds and injuries of
- X
- Xanthines, as diuretics, 87  
as diuretics, mechanism of action of, 87  
in treatment of coronary artery disease, 270